**Pair of Irenes are winners in M2 Fitness yearend contests. PAGE 2**
**Detachment gets rid of WWII ordnance on Tinian. PAGE 3**

Hafa Adai!

# Saipan Tribune

$1

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXXII, Issue No. 252

www.saipantribune.com | TUESDAY DECEMBER 20, 2022 | www.facebook.com/saipantribune

## '$1.5M to $2M left of $17M BOOST Program, but over $300M collectively requested'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Bank of Saipan president John Arroyo disclosed yesterday that of the $17 million appropriated to the Torres administration's Building Optimism, Opportunity and Stability Together, or BOOST Program, there is only $1.5 million to $2 million left, but there are still thousands of BOOST applicants left.

After Office of the Governor chief of staff William "Wil" Castro completed his testimony yesterday, it was Arroyo's turn on the hot seat and he disclosed that the bulk of the $17 million appropriated to the BOOST Program has already been distributed

See BOOST on Page 4

# FBI raids Bank of Saipan

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Federal Bureau of Investigation launched another raid yesterday, this time at the Oleai branch of Bank of Saipan.

KIMBERLY ESMORES
The Oleai branch of the Bank of Saipan along Beach Road.

FBI agents swarmed into the Bank of Saipan office along Beach Road yesterday morning, to carry out a search warrant. There was no immediate word on what the FBI was looking for.

The raid was conducted just days after the FBI stormed the Department of Public Safety and the Bureau of Motor Vehicles last Friday for reasons that have yet to be disclosed to the public.

A Bank of Saipan employee who requested anonymity as he/she was not authorized to speak told *Saipan Tribune* that the reason the FBI raided the

See FBI on Page 4

## CEC's Sablan changes mind about resigning

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Commonwealth Election Commission board chair Jesus I. Sablan said Friday that he will no longer continue his plan to resign and instead will help make future CNMI elections more efficient.

See CEC on Page 4

Sablan

## Kilili: Federal match rates for NMI's Medicaid will remain at 83 pct.

The federal match rate for the CNMI's Medicaid will remain at the current 83% through Dec. 23, according to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) over the weekend.

Sablan

Sablan said in his *e-kilili* newsletter that the federal matching rate of 83% remains after the U.S. Congress passed last week another fiscal 2023

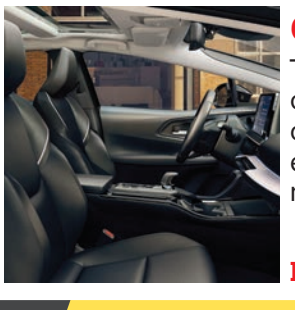
See KILILI on Page 4

**TINIAN DELEGATION** CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Maj. Gen. Esther Aguigui, rightmost, joins Tinian Mayor Edwin Aldan, center, and Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian), leftmost, get food during a reception at the Guam National Guard Barrigada Readiness Complex last Dec. 19. In addition to discussing partnerships in regional security and other issues, the guests were treated to a *mirenda* with *tinala katne, titiyas,* and various kinds of *kelaguen* including fish, chicken, and shrimp.

## INSIDE

**WORLD**
Jews in Ukraine lit a giant menorah on Sunday to start the eight-day Hanukkah holiday.

PAGE 13



**OVERDRIVE**
Toyota's designers create a Prius that offers a driving experience that matched its new looks.

PAGE 14

**LIFE & STYLE**
"Avatar: The Way of Water" helps breathe life into the box office with a $434.5 million debut.

PAGE 15

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

# Local

# Pair of Irenes are winners in M2 Fitness yearend contests

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

M2 Fitness, a health and fitness nonprofit organization, held its yearend Christmas party last Friday at the Taga Hall of Saipan World Resort, featuring several contests and a pair Irene's claiming top prizes.

A total of 23 participants walked the red carpet wearing various costumes and gowns, with Irene Dela Paz crowned as the Star of the Night 2022 with her DIY—a denim, M2 Fitness Zumba-inspired costume.

Dela Paz said it took her two weeks to create her costume. "[M2 Fitness] coach Mary Grace [Bautista] has really taught me a lot of things in regards to fitness so I have to know which is the brand that is famous when it comes to Zumba."

Vincent Rabasto, Desolee Calayo, Emily Cabrera, and Mark Vasquez joined Dela Paz in the Top 5 of the Star of the Night contest.

In the 45-Day Body Transformation Challenge, Irene Cristobal topped the competition overall, as her physique impressed the judges the most. The 50-year-old also won the Healthiest Meal Award and credits her win to her hard work and discipline.

Irene Cristobal is seen with her fitness routine that won here first place in the 45-Day Body Challenge during the M2 Fitness year end Christmas party at the Taga Hall of Saipan World Resort last Friday. LEIGH GASES

Irene Dela Paz won the Star of the Night 2022 award and is joined in this picture by panel judge Anastasia Inos, right of Dela Paz, and M2 Fitness president Mary Grace Bautista, right, during the M2 Fitness year end Christmas party at the Taga Hall of Saipan World Resort last Friday. LEIGH GASES

The Dancing Venom won first place in the group dancing competition during the M2 Fitness year end Christmas party at the Taga Hall of Saipan World Resort last Friday. LEIGH GASES

Rosanna Lopez and Judy Ann Ramos won second and third places, respectivelys in the 45-Day Body Transformation Challenge; Damian Lastimado Jr. won the Best Daily Workout Challenge Award.

To cap off the night, a group dancing competition featured three dance groups Zumbalicious, Dancing Venom, and M2 Balingkinitan. In a show of synchronized dancing and colorful and creative costumes, Dancing Venom danced their way to first place, along with winning the Best in Costume award and Coaches Choice award.

Second place went to M2 Balingkinitan and third place went to Zumbalicious.

The competitions were judged by ex-Filipino actor Bojo Molina and prolific members of the CNMI fitness scene: Dee Clayton, DC Classic president; Derek Cutting, Latte Built Gym owner; Somia Quan, Northern Marianas Volleyball Association president; and Anastasia Inos, Marianas High School teacher and health and nutrition trainer for Stellar Marianas.

M2 Fitness president Mary Grace Bautista thanked everyone for being there, along with their members, sponsors and judges. "Without those support, this event would not have been possible. Of course, we would like to thank all the members for the reason why we are all gathered here tonight because this very special night is yours. Thank you to all our hardworking group performers and their leaders. … You all did great and are a big part of this event. Thank you for the hard work and self-discipline of all 45-Day Body Transformation Challenge participants/challengers. Thank you to all who put lots of effort to make their costume for the fashion show theme, it makes the night even more perfect." She also thanked the panel of judges for joining in the group's 3rd annual celebration.

mari bar
HOLIDAY SEASON
HAPPY HOUR
25% OFF ON ALL BEVERAGE
DAILY FROM 5-7 PM
Available until December 30, 2022
Scan QR code for reservations
MARI BAR
Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan
Reservations call 670-234-6414 | website: saipan.crowneplaza.com

# Detachment gets rid of WWII ordnance on Tinian

**ASAN, Guam—**Sailors from Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 5 Detachment Marianas disposed of approximately 50 lbs of World War II unexploded ordnance on Tinian last Nov. 3.

The ordnance consisted of both U.S. and Japanese projectiles, grenades, and small arms ammunition that were discovered throughout the island of Tinian over the past year.

Members of the CNMI Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, CNMI Department of Public Safety, and CNMI Homeland Security and Emergency Management partnered with the U.S. Navy to inform the public of the operation and to restrict public access to the disposal site.

Over a three-day period, the sailors from EODMU 5 Detachment Marianas surveyed safe disposal locations and prepared the ordnance for final transportation. This included planning to conduct a render safe procedure on a U.S. Navy 5-inch projectile. The team verified that this round was armed and could detonate if proper procedures were not followed.

All UXO requires precise handling precautions before the items can be safely disposed of to ensure safety for responders.

During the RSP, the team disarmed the round's fuze with a specialized tool used to shear off its firing pin, preventing unintended detonation. As a precaution, responders created a bunker of soil and clay-filled bags that covered the round. This method, called tamping, was also used for the final disposal to prevent fragments, soil, or other displaced minerals from traveling far distances outside of the safe zone established by CNMI authorities.

EODMU Five Detachment Marianas Officer-in-Charge Lt. Jason Moyer said residents should immediately vacate the area and contact emergency responders if they discover ordnance.

"All unexploded ordnance inherently contains grave risk to anyone who comes in contact with it," he said. "If not handled properly there is always a chance for unintended detonation to occur that could prove fatal. We always encourage the public to call local authorities if they suspect that something they've come across could be UXO. Unfortunately, the threat of UXO discovery is a reality, but EODMU 5 remains committed to preventing disaster and aiding the people of CNMI."

The mission of EODMU 5 Detachment Marianas is to render safe all types of ordnance, conventional and unconventional, improvised, chemical, biological, and nuclear to include improvised explosive devices and weapons of mass destruction. EODMU 5 performs land and underwater location, identification, render-safe, recovery, and disposal of foreign and domestic ordnance.

EODMU 5 is assigned to Commander, Task Force 75, which executes command and control of assigned Navy Expeditionary Combat Forces in the 7th Fleet area of operations. They plan and execute Naval Construction, Expeditionary Logistics, Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Maritime Expeditionary Security, and Exploitation Forces assigned to Commander, 7th Fleet for crisis response, humanitarian assistance, and major combat operations. ***(JRM)***

U.S. NAVY/MCS3 DANNY RAY NUÑEZ JR.

File photo from Aug. 9, 2018, show a cache of unexploded ordnance for detonation in Marpi, Saipan.

# MTEC launches tourism app challenge

The Marianas Tourism Education Council is inviting all middle school and high school students in the Marianas to join its app challenge and design an app for visitors to the destination.

"We're challenging all middle and high school students to use their 21st century skills and design an app that will fulfill two purposes for tourism," said MTEC acting chair Vicky Benavente. "First, to enhance tourists' understanding of the island community, landscape, hospitality businesses and other service elements that the Northern Mariana Islands is proud to offer. And second, to provide accurate and timely information about the place, people, organizations and services we have to offer as a destination."

Students may compete as individuals or in teams of up to three students. Each participating individual or team shall submit only one app for competition. The deadline to submit is 11:59pm ChST, Feb. 6, 2023. Cash prizes will be awarded to the team leader: 1st place, $500; second place, $300, and third place, $200.

The evaluation criteria include originality of the app idea, creativity of the app design, mobile user experience, and demonstration of indigenous cultures, traditions and/or values. The app should be developed for mobile operating systems (Android OS or iOS) and be installable on a mobile smartphone or tablet device.

The app should have a search function and an island map for navigation, in addition to the functionalities and design elements created by the contestant(s).

To submit:

1. Develop a video (up to 5 minutes) that explains the app purpose, functionalities, target audience, coding language, how-to-use steps.

. 2. Upload the video to YouTube or any other video hosting platform, and generate a URL that is accessible for the public without sign-in requirement or password protection.

3. Email the URL, along with team leader and team member names, school name, email and mailing addresses, and contact phone number to yunzi.zhang@marianas.edu The email subject line should be: MTEC App Challenge_LastNameofTeamLeader (e.g. MTEC App Challenge_Smith).

Winners will be announced in February 2023. For more information, contact Northern Marianas College associate professor of Hospitality Management Dr. Yunzi Zhang at yunzi.zhang@marianas.edu or Marianas Visitors Authority community projects specialist Jack Aranda at jaranda@mymarianas.com or 1.670.664.3200/1. ***(MVA)***

FOODY'S
Bank of Guam
4720 1234 5678 9010
4720
GOOD THRU 12/23
BOG CARDHOLDER
VISA
Debit
Seasons Savings
Save 6%*
when you fuel up at Shell using
your Bank of Guam Visa® debit card
Learn more at bankofguam.com
Bank of Guam 50
Member FDIC
* Promotional period is from now through December 31, 2022. Offer only valid with personal Bank of Guam Visa debit card used at participating Guam and Saipan Shell stations. Additional terms and conditions apply.

# Terminated firefighters want CSC decision reversed

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The nine former firefighters who were terminated for refusing to be vaccinated against COVID-19 have refiled their lawsuit against the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services and wants reversed the Civil Service Commission's decision affirming DFEMS' decision to terminate them.

The nine former firefighters—Paul Acebedo, Jose K. Angui, Allen T. Calvo, Cain C. Castro, Algernon A. Flores, Derek B. Gersonde, Shawn DLR Kaipat, Philip Kalen, and Adam J. Safer—have refiled their lawsuit at the Superior Court through their attorney, Joseph Horey.

Changes made to the refiled lawsuit include naming acting DFEMS commissioner Jesse Mesa as a defendant in place of former fire chief Dennis Mendiola, and adding the Civil Service Commission as a defendant.

In their refiled suit, the plaintiffs are now asking the Superior Court to reverse the decision of the Civil Service Commission that affirmed the fire department's adverse action that terminated them for insubordination.

The plaintiffs want the court to issue an order finding their termination "invalid and unlawful." They also want an order to hold the plaintiffs' terminations unlawful and to set these aside.

In addition, the former firefighters are seeking an injunction reinstating them to their pre-termination positions, with back pay, leave, and benefits from the date of their termination.

In addition, the lawsuit is asking for an undetermined monetary award and damage for emotional distress.

In September 2021, Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho granted the request through a stipulation by the parties to dismiss without prejudice the lawsuit of the nine former firefighters against DFEMS and Mendiola.

As part of its findings, the court found that it had no jurisdiction over the plaintiffs' complaint.

The parties agreed to dismiss the case without prejudice, which meant it could be refiled.

The court found that the former firefighters tried to short-circuit the administrative process and did not engage fully with the administrative process and exhaust all administrative remedies available to them when they filed their lawsuit simultaneously with their appeal.

The former firefighters were terminated for insubordination following their refusal to take the COVID-19 vaccine as required by the CNMI Governor's Directive 2021-002 issued on Feb. 18, 2021.

On Aug. 3, 2022, the Civil Service Commission denied the former firefighters' appeal and affirmed the fire department's decision to terminate them.

# Guam Legislature passes abortion ban; governor veto expected

**HAGATNA, Guam** (AP)—Guam's Legislature on Friday passed a bill prohibiting most abortions, a measure modeled after a new Texas law that leaves enforcement up to private citizen lawsuits instead of criminal prosecution.

Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero, who favors abortion rights, is expected to veto the measure.

The Guam Heartbeat Act of 2022 passed the U.S. territory's unicameral legislature with eight senators in favor and seven opposed, the Pacific Daily News reported. Supporters would need 10 votes to override any veto.

The measure would ban abortion in Guam once cardiac activity is detected, usually around six weeks. That's before many people know they are pregnant.

It would allow any private citizen to sue Guam abortion providers who violate the law, as well as anyone who helps someone get the procedure. It doesn't allow lawsuits against abortion patients.

## BOOST

*From Page 1*

to over 200 applicants.

In response to a point raised by Rep. Christina E. Sablan (D-Saipan), Arroyo agreed that it is simply not possible to award all of the thousands of applicants who have collectively requested over $300 million.

"I know that at some point in time, when the funds run dry, then I would get a notification from them saying okay, so these applications are declined, let's provide notification to these individuals that their application was denied," the BOS president said.

He said notices of denial will be going out, but they're trying to figure out in what mechanisms would be economically feasible and effective.

Arroyo also testified on Bank of Saipan's role as the BOOST administrator, how the bank got selected for that job, among other things.

He said of the $17 million, the bank got 2%, or $340,000, for its banking services.

Arroyo will resume his testimony today, Tuesday, at 10am.

### 'Stop BOOST checks'

Soon after Castro completed his testimony yesterday, Rep. Joel Camacho (Ind-Saipan) recommended to the Ways and Means Committee and the Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee of the House of Representatives to ask the review panel of the BOOST Program to put on hold any further releases of BOOST checks.

After Castro was excused from the meeting yesterday, Camacho said he heard that the BOOST review panel released another batch of BOOST checks Friday.

"I think we need to put a stop to that," Camacho said, adding that it's not that he is against small businesses. He said there are many deserving small businesses that applied and have gotten a fraction of what they've asked for. He said the amounts are very reasonable compared to some individuals that got over $100,000.

Camacho said the transition of the new administration will be taking place in a few weeks and there are so many uncertainties, with even just a simple clear number of how much American Rescue Plan Act is left.

"We cannot even get that information. That's straight information," he said.

Castro started his testimony Friday and resumed his testimony yesterday. He completed his testimony yesterday, but Ways and Means Committee chair Rep. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota) told him that the committees may call him again.

### A plethora of lacks

Rep. Leila F. Staffler (D-Saipan) said the things that stand out to her is the general lack: "lack of transparency, lack of due diligence, lack of organization and SOPs, lack of planning, with so many last-minute decisions being communicated."

She said she has seen multiple conflicts of interests.

Rep. Vicente Camacho (D-Saipan) said he was very disappointed with Castro, knowing that he is a Harvard graduate, a former Guam senator, and the current chief of staff for this administration, and that he (Camacho) can't believe that Castro can't recall anything within the past year.

JGO chair Rep. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan) said what they have seen and heard since last Friday and this morning from Castro merely scratches the surface.

Babauta said that, throughout his testimony, Castro kept repeating the governor has the final say. "And I will quote: 'At the end of the day, the buck stops with him.' And he is held liable in his capacity as the chief executive and the only sole authority to expend these funds on behalf of the people," said Babauta, referring to Torres.

Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan) said he has never seen a more biased grant.

"I don't even know if you can call this really grant, gifts, or whatever you want to call it. Free money, cash grab may be better suited for it," Propst said.

Manglona said he feels that they are further from the truth in the wake of Castro's testimony.

"What we're trying to do here is better understand the BOOST Program, how it is administered, who's in charge of reviewing the applications, who approves these applications," Manglona said.

## CEC

*From Page 1*

"Earlier, I said it could be end of the month of early next month, but I still got a lot of things to do [at CEC]," said Sablan referring to his recent statement that the Nov. 25 gubernatorial runoff election would be his final election year.

Sablan said in an interview shortly after the CEC certified the runoff election results that they need to revisit election laws so they can make recommendations to the Legislature to make future elections simpler and easier to conduct.

"I decided not [to resign] for as long as my health permits me," said the 74-year-old Sablan.

The tabulation of votes during the Nov. 8 general elections lasted about 21 hours due to several factors.

In the general election, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and his running mate, Sen. Vinnie Vinson F. Sablan (R-Saipan), of the Republican Party, were the top voters in the three-way gubernatorial race but failed to gain the majority, paving the way for the Nov. 25 runoff election.

A total of 14,750 votes were counted during the Nov. 8 general election, while 13,657 votes were counted during the runoff race, or a big difference of 1,093.

Last Nov. 26, the chairman told *Saipan Tribune* shortly after they completed the counting of the runoff race votes that he has still three years and six months left on his term, but that he will resign after the runoff election due to health reasons.

Sablan has chaired the CEC board since 2018. Before his term expired on July 21, 2022, he informed Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and his fellow commissioners that he won't be accepting any re-appointment to the post for personal reasons.

However, no commissioner was interested to serve as chairman, prompting Sablan to reconsider his decision. He subsequently accepted Torres' re-appointment for him to serve another four years as CEC commissioner.

Sablan has been a CEC commissioner, representing the third Senatorial District, which is Saipan and Northern Islands, for 15 years.

## FBI

*From Page 1*

bank was because of an ongoing investigation into the Torres administration's Building Optimism, Opportunity and Stability Together, or BOOST Program, which the BOS administers. The program, which has awarded over $10 million to over 200 local businesses, has been a heated topic within the CNMI community for weeks, with a joint CNMI legislative committee looking into the program. ***See related story on front page.***

*Saipan Tribune* tried to speak with John Arroyo, Bank of Saipan president and CEO, as well as BOOST program administrator, at his office yesterday but he refused to speak to the media.

Meanwhile, James Curry, from the FBI's public affairs office in Honolulu, confirmed the raid but stated he could not give any additional information as the investigation remains ongoing.

"I can confirm an FBI investigation, but because the investigation is ongoing, we can't share anything additional at this time," he stated.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, the FBI has conducted multiple raids into various departments in the CNMI in the past three years, with the most recent one conducted at DPS Central office and the BMV offices in Susupe late Friday afternoon. As of press time, there is still no word on what they were looking for or what the raid was all about only that they were there to carry out a search warrant issued for both departments.

At the scene, FBI agents plastered handwritten "closed" signs on all the doors of BMV, closing up shop and putting a stop to all BMV activities for the rest of the day as they conducted their search.

At DPS central office, *Saipan Tribune* learned that FBI agents were reportedly seen going into administrative offices but were not seen taking anything. They were, however, seen taking photos of documents and others.

Soon after the raid, the CNMI Office of the Governor issued a memorandum stating that BMV director Juana Leon has been designated as acting DPS commissioner until the incoming administration appoints its own.

With the transition to a new administration, all appointees of the incumbent governor must resign from their post, as per standard procedure

However, there is still no official confirmation that DPS Commissioner Robert Guerrero has resigned. It was learned that he remains on personal leave.

## KILILI

*From Page 1*

continuing resolution.

"Without the extension, the statutory rate of 55% would have kicked in, costing the Commonwealth millions of dollars in matching fees," he said.

The delegate pointed out that the Marianas' current 83% Federal Medical Assistance Percentage rate, or FMAP, is higher than it is for any state.

Sablan said the FMAP was set in U.S. Public Law 116-94 in 2019, extended in U.S. Public Law 117-103 and in a previous continuing resolution earlier this year, but would have expired on Dec. 16, 2022 without this week's action.

He said the continuing resolution provides appropriators more time to draft an omnibus spending bill to cover the entire fiscal year.

The delegate said the omnibus is expected to be released yesterday.

Sablan said his congressional office has worked continually this year to make sure the need for the Medicaid extension for the Marianas was not forgotten.

The delegate said he is grateful to U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi and to Energy and Commerce Committee chair Rep. Frank Pallone and their staff for their commitment to some 38,000 people in the Marianas who depend on Medicaid for their healthcare. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Happy Holidays

MARIANAS COFFEE

Marianas Strong Since 2004

**Marianas Coffee wants to thank all its customers and businesses for supporting our locally roasted coffee products here on Saipan.**

## Hotels

Hyatt Regency
Aqua Resort Club
Pacific Islands Club
Saipan World Resort
Coral Ocean Resort
Grandvrio Resort Saipan

## Stores

Joeten Superstore
Joeten Stores
ABC Stores
Brabu Pharmacy
Himawari Saipan
LJ's Market

## Restaurants & Bars

Godfather's Bar
Java Joes
Marianas Creations
Island Café
Mango Six Café

**We kindly ask you to support and use these fine establishments for their excellent service and commitment to local brands.**

Thank You,
David Hood
& TEAM

# OPA reminds election candidates of filing requirements

The Office of the Public Auditor is reminding all political parties and candidates in the just concluded 2022 general elections that all certified candidates must file a detailed "Campaign Statement of Account," as required under 1 CMC § 6424.

This itemized financial statement, prepared with the advice and co-signature of the candidate's treasurer, must show the specific source(s), name(s) of contributor(s), and amount(s) of contributions and expenses.

OPA is mandated by law to receive the filing of such statements.

Failure to file a complete, signed, dated and verified statement within 50 days after the election shall subject the candidate to a fine of up to $100 per day for each date the statement is late.

The Campaign Statement of Account form, suggested reports, and supporting schedules are available on the Commonwealth Election Commission's website at www.votecnmi.gov.mp.

In addition, pursuant to 1 CMC § 8511 (c), elected officials shall file a statement of financial interest at the time of taking his or her oath of office. Deadline to file your Statement of Financial Interest form for Calendar Year 2022 is before Inauguration Day scheduled for Jan. 9, 2023. An extension granted for a Campaign Statement of Account does not apply to the SFI. The SFI can be obtained on the OPA website at www.opacnmi.com. ***(PR)***

**A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com**

## CUC ADVISORIES

### Emergency water service interruption in As Terlaje, Chalan Laulau, portion of Gualo Rai and south Garapan

There is an emergency water service interruption in effect since yesterday afternoon for customers in the following areas: As Terlaje, Chalan Laulau Middle Road and Beach Road, a portion of Gualo Rai on Middle Road, and south of Garapan on Beach Road from the Horiguchi Building to the new Bank of Saipan.

The emergency water outage is due to the isolation of a 16-inch waterline leak identified early yesterday morning on Chalan Msgr. Guerrero in front of the Chalan Kiya Mobil Gas Station. Water operators will be performing the main line leak repair and anticipate completing the repairs by today, Tuesday, Dec. 20, 2022, at 6am. Water services to the affected areas will resume thereafter.

For the safety of the men and women on the job site, motorists are advised to take alternative routes or proceed with caution as a portion of the eastbound lane will be closed during the emergency leak repair.

For more information, contact the CUC Customer Call Center (664-4282) or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates. ***(PR)***

### Emergency water service interruption in parts of Kannat Tabla and entire Chalan Kiya

There is an emergency water service interruption for Commonwealth Utilities Corp. customers in the following areas: portions of Kannat Tabla and the entire Chalan Kiya starting yesterday, Dec. 19, 2022 at 2:30pm until today, Dec. 20, 2022, at 6am.

This is due to a booster pump failure at the As Terlaje water tank, which has resulted to the low water level at the Kannat Tabla tank. The replacement of the booster pump is ongoing and anticipated to be completed at 5pm yesterday; however, water services to the affected areas will resume today, Dec. 20, 2022, at 6am to allow the water tank to fill.

For more information, contact the CUC Hotline (236-4333) or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates (https://www.facebook.coml-CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/). ***(PR)***

# Public warned of rough seas

A small craft advisory remains in effect until 6am Wednesday in Marianas coastal waters. Conditions will be hazardous to small craft.

Also, there is a high risk of dangerous rip currents through tonight in east facing reefs of the Marianas.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam, and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, seas of 7 to 10 feet will be present on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota until 6am Wednesday and may briefly fall below 10 feet, but an approaching northwest swell will help to increase seas back up to 10 feet around today, Tuesday.

A small craft advisory means that wind speeds of 21 to 33 knots are expected to produce wave conditions hazardous to small craft.

Inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, should avoid boating in hazardous conditions.

As for the rip current advisory, the public is being warned that rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water.

A northwest swell, generated by a cold front located south of Japan, is approaching the Marianas. This will increase surf along north and west facing reefs around Tuesday. This could expand the high risk of rip currents to north facing reefs and generate hazardous surf along north facing reefs as well.

The public is being urged to swim near a lifeguard. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Don't swim against the current. If able, swim in a direction following the shoreline. If unable to escape, face the shore and call or wave for help. ***(Saipan Tribune)***


# VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT NO. 22-02
**United States District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands**

## Case Administrator

Permanent, Full-Time Position - Location: SAIPAN, NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS (CNMI) Starting grade: CL-24 step 1 to CL 26 Step 25 ($44,553 to $67,769 which includes 12.45 % COLA) (Ultimate pay potential CL 26 ($67,769 - $88,137) by progressive performance and career salary progression)

Opening Date: December 19, 2022 • Applications received by January 3, 2023 will be given priority.

**Position Overview:**
This is a mid-to-full qualified operational court support position. The Case Administrator will review, process, and maintain records of court cases and handle the progression of cases to final disposition. Additional duties will be assigned as Relief Courtroom Deputy, and as Procurement Specialist. Other duties include cashiering, mail processing, customer service, scanning and copying documents, and organizing and shelving library materials. This position includes full federal employment benefits, with paid leave and holidays, health insurance, life insurance, and federal retirement benefits. Obtain a copy of the complete position description at https://www.nmid.uscourts.gov/employment

**Minimum Qualifications and Preferred Qualifications:**
High school graduate or equivalent, with at least two years of specialized work experience in applying recurring procedures and using specialized terminology that demonstrate the ability to apply a body of rules, regulations, directives, or laws, preferably in a court or related legal field. Education will not be substituted for required specialized work experience, but additional preference will be given for college graduation. Applicants should demonstrate sound ethics and judgment, be able to communicate effectively (orally and in writing) and have above-minimal skill in the use of office productivity software and online research skills. Additional preference will be given for skill in using automated case management systems.

**Citizenship Requirement:**
Applicants are required to be U.S. citizens or aliens who are authorized to work in the United States.

**Notice to Applicants:**
Excepted service appointments are "at will" and may be terminated by either the court or the employee at any time for any reason. Selectees may be subject to a background check or investigation and suitability determination; and may be subject to an updated background investigations every five years. Employees are subject to the Judicial Code of Conduct. Direct bank deposit of pay is required.

**Application Procedure:**
Each applicant is required to submit a Cover Letter, Resume, and an AO-78 application form. (Questions 18, 19, and 20 on page 5 of the AO-78 need not be answered.) AO-78 forms are at: https://www.uscourts.gov/forms/human-resources-forms/application-judicial-branch-federal-employment or may be picked up at the U.S. District Court. Position is open until filled; applications received by January 3, 2023 will be given priority.

**We prefer you to email signed applications as a *single PDF file* to:** HR@nmid.uscourts.gov

**You may deliver signed applications to:**
Clerk of Court
United States District Court
for the Northern Mariana Islands
3rd Floor, United States Courthouse, Gualo Rai, Saipan

*The United States District Court is an Equal Opportunity Employer.*



# COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

## REQUEST FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES
## CUC-RAESP-23-004

**A&E Design Services for Tinian Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Collection System & Rota Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Collection System Preliminary Engineering Report**

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified Architectural and Engineering (A&E) firms for Preliminary Engineering Reports (PER) for a Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Collection System on Tinian and Rota. The services shall include preparation of the PER as per USDA RUS Bulletin 1780-2.

*This project is funded by a grant from the United States Office of Insular Affairs, U.S. Department of Interior.*

Prospective Proposers for this project must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division via email to marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org. The RAESP package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office via email after registration.

**One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the Proposal and One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of the Cost Proposal** in a separate envelope must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-RAESP-23-004, A&E Services for Tinian Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Collection System & Rota Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Collection System – Preliminary Engineering Report",** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 a.m., (ChST) on January 18, 2023. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.**

Discussions may be conducted with responsible proposers who submit proposal determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from the proposal submitted by competing proposers.

All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposers due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Consultant's preparation of a proposal under the contract. The RAESP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the statement of qualifications under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Consultants are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RAESP and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 28, 2022** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Ms. Nicolette Villagomez, CUC Water/Wastewater, Engineer – via email, nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org; Larry Manacop, CUC Acting Chief Engineer at email larry.manacop@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, Administrative Technician Senior – via email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and waive any imperfection in the proposal in the best interest of the government. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

**GARY P. CAMACHO**
**Executive Director**

**MANNY B. SABLAN**
**Purchasing Administrator**

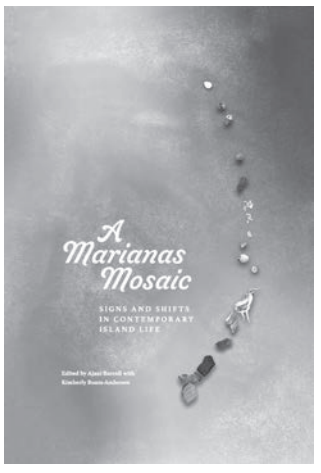
# UOG Press' newest imprint to launch 1st title on Saipan

Delegates from the University of Guam Press and the Northern Marianas College celebrate the formal signing of UOG Press's newest imprint, Proa Publications, in February 2022 at UOG. From left, UOG senior vice president and provost Anita Borja Enriquez; UOG president Thomas W. Krise; NMC president Galvin Deleon Guerrero; and NMC vice president Frankie Eliptico. UOG

The University of Guam Press and the Northern Marianas College will celebrate the official launch of their newly established imprint, Proa Publications, and its first title, *A Marianas Mosaic: Signs and Shifts in Contemporary Island Life* on Saipan.

Proa Publications was established in January 2022 through a memorandum of understanding between UOG Press and NMC.

"*A Marianas Mosaic* is the first of many books that serves as a testament to UOG and NMC's combined efforts to uplift the communities we are dedicated to serving," said NMC president Galvin Deleon Guerrero. "As academic institutions rooted in discovery, excellence and cultural vitality, we look ahead with optimism at the opportunities arising from our continued partnership."




Proa Publications' first title, *A Marianas Mosaic: Signs and Shifts in Contemporary Island Life*, will be launched at the NMI Museum of History and Culture on Saipan on Friday, Jan. 13, 2023, at 5:30pm. UOG

UOG Press publishing director Victoria-Lola Leon Guerrero said the launch of Proa Publications illustrates the publishing house's commitment to expanding publishing opportunities throughout the region.

"Our mission is to expand accessibility to knowledge about Micronesia through our high-quality, peer-reviewed publications," Leon Guerrero said. "*A Marianas Mosaic* is a wonderful first book for Proa Publications as it features a collection of academic and literary writing about the unique experiences and perspectives of the peoples of the Marianas."

Burrell

*A Marianas Mosaic* was edited by Ajani Burrell with Kimberly Bunts-Anderson, both faculty at NMC. The anthology explores the many "modes, forms, and voices of life in the Marianas today," said Burrell. "We hope it provides a partial record of contemporary dynamics in the region and helps to foster vital dialogue about those dynamics."

*A Marianas Mosaic* was produced with support from the Northern Marianas Humanities Council, which views the publication as an opportunity to amplify the voices and stories of the Mariana Islands. "It is exciting to see this work published through our partner UOG Press and to bring the weave of our collective cultural tapestry of these islands into one book," said NMHC's executive director Leo Pangelinan.

Leon Guerrero

The book's launch will be held at the NMI Museum of History and Culture on Friday, Jan. 13, 2023, at 5:30pm. Space is limited and patrons interested in attending must RSVP no later than Tuesday, Jan. 10, 2023 with Carla Sablan at carla.sablan@marianas.edu or (670) 237-6780/6833.

Deleon Guerrero

Following the launch, NMHC will host a "Meet the Authors" event and book signing at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library in Saipan on Saturday, Jan. 14, 2023, from 10am to noon.

Pangelinan

Pre-orders for *A Marianas Mosaic* are available now for a special launch price of $35 at uogpress.com, and sales in all local bookstores will begin after the launch.

For more information, contact Sablan or De Fant at defantv@triton.uog.edu or (671) 735-2153. ***(UOG)***

## COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
### OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## INVITATION FOR BIDS
## CUC-IFB-23-009

### SUPPLY & DELIVERY OF POWER DISTRIBUTION ANNUAL MATERIALS

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified vendors for the Supply and Delivery of Power Distribution Annual Materials for Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.
CUC may award a contract to more than one firm for the materials, based on bids for "Commodity Groups".

**One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies** must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-IFB-23-009, Supply & Delivery of Power Distribution Annual Materials, Saipan, CNMI" to CUC Procurement & Supply Division, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Dandan, Saipan MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 a.m. (ChST) on January 19, 2023**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. An electronic copy of the entire submission is also required to be sent via email to CUC Procurement & Supply Division via email address, marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

A *Bid Guarantee* of not less than fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations. All responses to this Invitation for Bids should take into account any and all taxes, including excise tax, which will become the obligation of the bidder, awarded a contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (C1hST) on December 29, 2022** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Marcela Tenorio, CUC Senior Purchasing Technician via email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org; Joseph Crisostomo, CUC Power Division Purchasing Technician via email joseph.crisostomo@cucgov.org and Alfred Palattao, Jr., CUC Power Division Engineer via email alfred.palattao@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in said bid proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

**GARY P. CAMACHO**
**Executive Director**

**MANNY BOYER SABLAN**
**Purchasing Administrator**

# Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXXII, Issue No. 252
Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

**Jayvee L. Vallejera** EDITOR
editor@saipantribune.com

**Mark Rabago** ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER
The Associated Press Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

## Mask, needle, health: Masks and vaccines are still our best shot to withstand a winter surge in respiratory infections

The clunky word "tripledemic" is now on many lips. It means we now face a winter with three different respiratory viruses with similar symptoms are spreading rapidly, and stressing hospital capacity.

Public health is not rocket science. The best way to frustrate the tiny danger is for people to mask in public and, whenever possible, to get shots to protect themselves.

The first virus sending people to the ER and ICU is our now familiar foe COVID-19—which on the cusp of 2023, despite having become less virulent as it has evolved, is still killing more than 450 Americans per day. The second is the perennial scourge called influenza, for which hospitalizations are spiking. The third is RSV, a pathogen that, while no fun to catch no matter how old you are, is especially hard on infants.

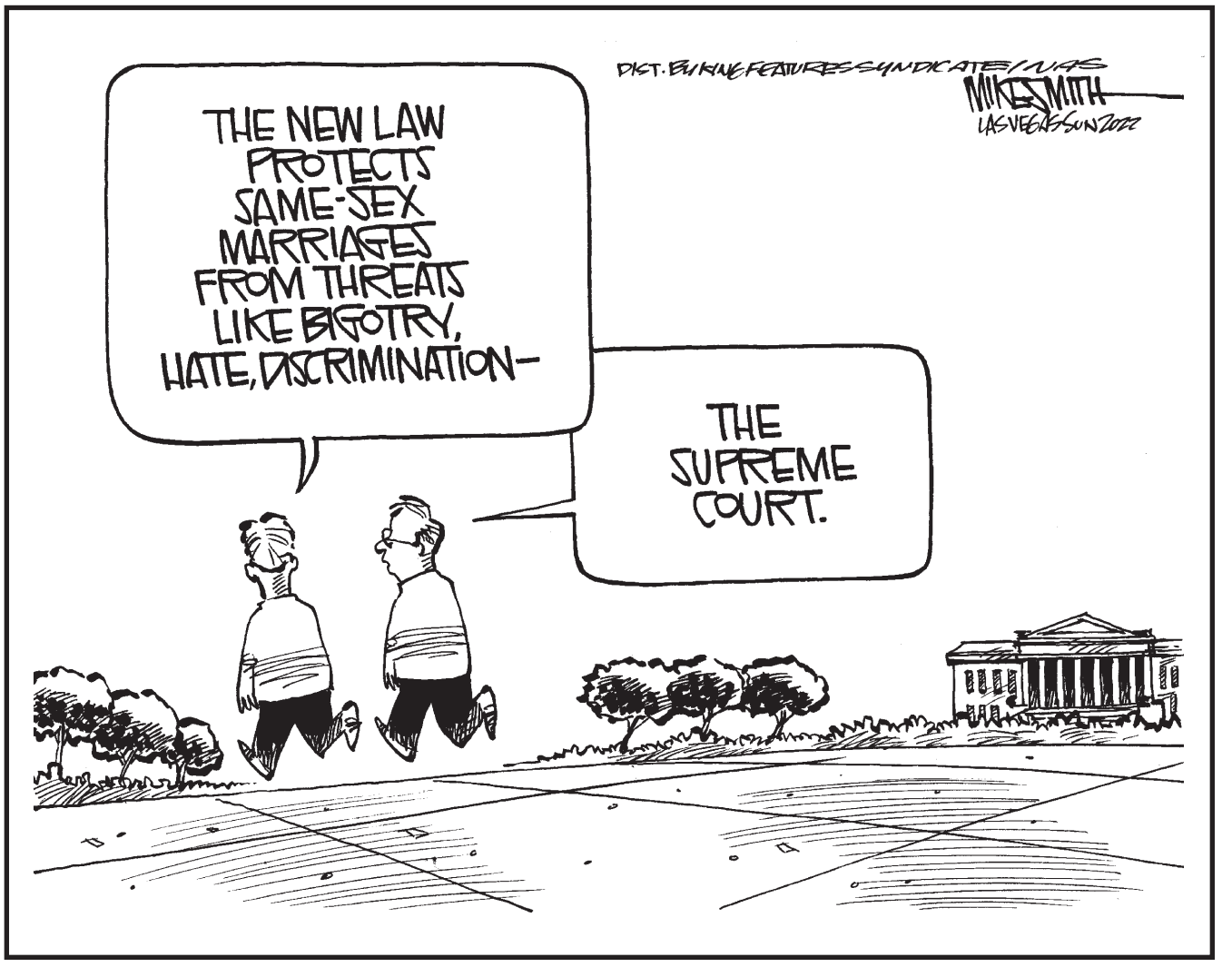
When in public and indoors, covering your face with a high-quality mask remains the simplest and easiest line of defense against the triumvirate, akin to wearing sunscreen in the blazing heat. The second weapon in the arsenal is the needle, which delivers imperfect but safe and fairly reliable protection against two of the viruses.

COVID is no longer truly a "pandemic of the unvaccinated"—in November, 90% of those who died of COVID were 65 or older, many of whom had their first two or even three shots. But still just 14% of Americans by most recent count have had their bivalent boosters, which guard against the newest variants. Older folks especially, with weaker immune systems, need these extra shots so a bout with COVID doesn't become deadly.

Flu shots are available at your local pharmacy. It takes a few seconds and may well spare you and those you love from many days of misery. This year's shot is a good match to the strains that are circulating.

As for RSV, it has no general population shot yet (just one for preemies and other highly vulnerable babies), but a few good candidates are in the pipeline. Step on it.

©2022 New York Daily News


DIST. BY KING FEATURES SYNDICATE/UAS
MIKE SMITH
LAS VEGAS SUN 2022
THE NEW LAW PROTECTS SAME-SEX MARRIAGES FROM THREATS LIKE BIGOTRY, HATE, DISCRIMINATION—
THE SUPREME COURT.

## When we treat domestic violence as a private affair, we are culpable in perpetuating it

**By DIANE ROSENFELD**
Chicago Tribune

*Diane Rosenfeld is the author of* The Bonobo Sisterhood: Revolution Through Female Alliance *and teaches at Harvard Law School.*

Buffalo Grove, Illinois, village spokesperson Molly Gillespie announced at a news conference that there was no threat to the public from the domestic terrorist attack at a suburban home earlier this month. I beg to differ. It is precisely when we treat domestic violence as contained to the particular family in which it is occurring that we play a part in perpetuating it rather than doing what we can as friends, family, neighbors or law enforcement to stop it from escalating.

We need to treat domestic terrorism as the insidious threat that it is. We should not accept it as an inevitable or acceptable aspect of everyday life.

I call it domestic terrorism because if we call it domestic violence, we immediately think of it as contained within the walls of the family home. The village's remarks reinforce that notion. But if we call it an active terrorist threat, we would expect law enforcement to use its full power to prevent that threat from materializing. Language matters. A terrorist threat is no less a threat when made by a man to his family members; it is actually more of a threat because of the power he wields over them and the access to them that he has.

Andrei Kisliak had threatened his wife, Vera, that if she left him, he would "kill and disfigure" her to a way that no one will recognize her, according to court filings. He had threatened to kill her family as well—in gruesome ways, filings show. Yet, after police had seen him at the house in violation of the order of protection, he came back to the house again the very next day. Imagine the terror Vera Kisliak was living under during this time, knowing that with inconsistent protection, she had to fend for herself and her children.

A few days before Andrei Kisliak killed his family and then himself, I had sent a letter to the Baltimore police commissioner on behalf of a woman whose estranged husband is threatening to kill her on what would have been their upcoming wedding anniversary. Instead of describing the situation as domestic violence or violations of her order of protection, I wrote in capital letters: "ACTIVE TERRORIST THREAT." It appears they are now paying attention, promising to serve the warrant for his arrest and take appropriate action to protect the threatened woman, whose life is completely and unfairly disrupted.

Over two decades ago, I wrote that domestic violence homicide is so predictable as to be preventable. It is the most preventable type of homicide because the perpetrator almost always tells his victim that he's going to kill her. Not only do we have notice of the premeditated murder, but also we know who the intended victim is. If we took seriously these threats and held the criminal making the threat responsible, we would save many women and children.

All domestic violence cases should be assessed for potential lethality. The cases that have red flags must be handled differently by a specially trained high-risk team. These teams are trained on preventing escalation and monitoring the situation to make sure that the offender is abiding by the terms of a protection order. A violation of the order can itself signal danger; it shows that the offender is disregarding authority, pushing the limits of the legal system.

Leaving is the most dangerous time for a woman in an abusive relationship. This means that divorce, which signals that she is leaving, is an inherently dangerous time because she is seeking independence from the control of a person who believes that he owns her. We need to be on high alert whenever threats to kill are made in the context of a divorce or separation.

What can we do?

First, change your thinking about domestic violence being a private family issue. The isolation imposed intentionally by an abuser increases the victim's vulnerability. Thus, we need to counter this isolation by surrounding a victim with support, resources and attention. Think of it as a neighborhood watch program, something that you might initiate to fight other types of crime in your area.

Second, find a self-defense course that is offered either by your local police department or privately and take a victim to a class. This action is likely easier than convincing her that

*See WHEN on Next Page*

**EDITORIAL POLICY** Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

# Fusion skepticism follows a century of genius, fraud and hype

**By STEPHEN MIHM**
Bloomberg Opinion

*Stephen Mihm, a professor of history at the University of Georgia, is coauthor of* Crisis Economics: A Crash Course in the Future of Finance.

Last week government scientists at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory achieved a long-sought milestone in developing clean fusion energy. For the first time, the amount of energy produced by a fusion reaction exceeded the energy required to produce it.

The press dutifully reported the news, but there has been little celebration outside of scientific circles. For most people, fusion remains a futuristic pipe dream, constantly lurking around the corner, never materializing.

There are reasons for skepticism: Few scientific endeavors have been dogged by so many dead ends and false claims. But this has blinded us to the fact that, disappointments aside, scientists have been making slow but steady progress on fusion far longer than many people realize.

The ideas behind fusion originated with a paper delivered by British astrophysicist Arthur Eddington at a conference held in 1920. A devout Quaker and brilliant scientist, Eddington ventured an answer to an age-old question: How do stars like the sun generate energy?

He speculated that the immense pressure inside stars fused hydrogen atoms together, creating helium. This "fusion" converted some of the original matter into raw energy. As Eddington put it: the stars' "sub-atomic energy is…freely used to maintain their great furnaces…"

Eddington admitted to his listeners that he was more or less spitballing. But everything he said that day proved eerily accurate, including his warning that control of this latent power could be used for the benefit of the human race—"or its suicide."

In the 1930s, chemist Ernest Rutherford and two collaborators began conducting experiments with a heavy isotope of hydrogen known as deuterium. In 1934, the team slammed deuterium atoms together, turning the isotope into helium while simultaneously producing what they described as "an enormous effect"—a blast of energy.

This was fusion in miniature. Four years later, German physicist Hans Bethe figured out the precise subatomic sequence of events that undergird the process. That same year, two young scientists read Bethe's article on the subject and resolved to put his ideas into practice.

The eccentric duo, Arthur Kantrowitz and Eastman Jacobs, worked at a government research facility focused on aircraft performance. Building a fusion reactor had nothing to do with their jobs, so they dubbed their creation a "Diffusion Inhibitor," a vague but pretentious phrase that deterred superiors from asking too many questions.

Their design, foreshadowing later developments, featured a metal donut, or "torus," lined with magnets designed to contain and control the reaction. Lasers hadn't been invented, so they opted for radio waves to superheat the hydrogen. This consumed so much power that they had to conduct experiments at night to avoid taking down the power grid.

Ultimately, they flipped the switch and nothing happened. Not long afterward, their superiors caught on and shut down the project. No one realized it at the time, but the pair had come remarkably close to building the first fusion reactor, save for some flaws in the containment structure.

It wasn't until after World War II that scientists resumed work on fusion, all too aware of its speculative nature. James Tuck, a British physicist who had cut his teeth working on the Manhattan Project, designed an early fusion reactor he dubbed the "Perhapsatron," because "perhaps it will work and perhaps it will not."

Far less amusing was an episode that helps explain the longstanding skepticism of the new technology. In the late 1940s, Argentina's populist dictator, Juan Domingo Perón, funded the fusion research of an obscure Austrian scientist named Ronald Richter. In 1951, Peron proudly announced that Richter—who had close ties to former Nazis—had created the world's first fusion reactor. Subsequent scrutiny unmasked Richter's research as fundamentally flawed, if not fraudulent.

The following year, however, two developments underscored why fusion could not be ignored. First came news that the United States had detonated the world's first hydrogen bomb—effectively, an uncontrolled fusion reaction—reviving the suicide-of-the human-race problem that Eddington originally identified.

No less consequential was the work of theoretical physicist Lyman Spitzer at Princeton University on how to control the superheated gas, or plasma, at the heart of the fusion reactor. This state of matter is like a subatomic orgy, where atomic nuclei and electrons, formerly monogamous, promiscuously mingle. In order to contain the chaos, Spitzer sketched out a figure-eight apparatus he called the stellarator.

An avid mountaineer, the physicist christened his research Project Matterhorn on account of the long and arduous climb he foresaw in fusion research. Through the 1950s, Spitzer and his collaborators built a series of prototypes that marked a giant leap forward. At the same time, a group of physicists in the Soviet Union led by Andrei Sakharov and Igor Tamm developed their own model, known as a Tokamak, a Russian acronym referring to a gigantic magnetic donut, or torus.

So began a new phase in fusion research as scientists built ever larger stellarators and tokamaks. From the late 1950s onward, fusion moved from a theoretical, fanciful concept to something concrete. Unfortunately, these advances also led flamboyant promoters to get ahead of themselves, imagining a future defined by inexpensive, limitless power.

Typical of the genre was a breathless article in Popular Mechanics in 1959, "Fusion Power for the World of Tomorrow," predicting, "It may come sooner than you think!"

This hype proved damaging as well as unrealistic. Many commentators from the 1960s onward became increasingly disenchanted with fusion. Though the energy shortages of the 1970s led to more funding and renewed hopes, these inevitably fell short, bolstering the cynical view.

Lost in all the hoopla was the fact that scientific teams around the world continued to make slow but steady progress on turning fusion into a reality, gradually solving the technical challenges associated with containment while producing ever larger bursts of energy.

These piecemeal advances, not especially eye-catching when viewed in isolation, were overshadowed by failures and frauds like the infamous "cold fusion" controversy of 1989, when two researchers erroneously claimed they had created a stable fusion reaction at room temperature.

Fusion skeptics also delighted in pointing out that decades of research had never managed to achieve a so-called "net-energy gain." Anytime researchers fired up hydrogen isotopes into a frenzy, they always ended up with less energy than when they started.

That's why this week's announcement is so critical. No, it doesn't mean commercialization is imminent. But after many decades of trying, researchers have finally achieved a critical milestone in their quest to develop fusion power, bringing the world considerably closer to the vision Arthur Eddington first articulated more than a century ago.

# A sonnet for the winter solstice; haikus for Hanukkah

**LITERARY NOOK**

**By JOEY CONNOLLY**
Special to the Saipan Tribune

*Joey aka Pepe Batbon Connolly is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.*

## A CNMI Winter Solstice Sonnet

*(Winter solstice is Thursday, Dec. 22, 2022)*

The sun is coming up, the sun is going down
listen to the sound of rain on banana trees
bright flowers are blooming all over town
enjoy that nice cooling trade wind breeze
after the sun has risen you see that it rose
on its shortest trip through the sky this year
still long enough to burn your face and nose
time for lemon in your tea a tear in your beer
after it sets it is still not yet time for bed
all those things you wanted to do in daylight
but the tilting of the earth you cannot fight
as winter solstice through heaven knocks
I can't wait for Spring and vernal equinox.

## 8 Happy Hanukkah Haiku

*(Hanukkah is Dec. 18 to Dec. 26)*

*I wrote this 20 years ago for my students. Chanukkah occurs around the same time as Christmas and is called Festival of Lights. Would you like to know something about Hanukkah? Then read these haiku/senryu.*

Temple lamp lit for one night/stayed lit for 8/so we remember.

First night one candle/light a new candle each night/a blessing each day.

Festival of Lights/say "*nas gadol haya sham*"/for 8 successive days.

Judah Maccabee said/a great miracle happened here/Chanukkah time

8 branch menorah candle lit/temple rededication/on the date 25 Kislev

Hanukkah is complete/with 8 candles lit in the menorah/giving gelt (gold but now chocolate) gifts, potato latkes (pancakes) and song

Spin the top (dredl) now/and sing the song/"savivon sov sov sov, dredl spin spin spin"

Menorah aglow/it is a Jewish holiday

Happy Hanukkah!

## WHEN

*From Page 8*

she is in an abusive situation and needs help exiting. Learning self-defense will give her essential tools psychologically and physically to help her stand her ground and protect herself.

Third, create a group of people to support the victim when she goes to court or to the police. The system clearly isn't working, yet the enforcement of laws on the books could work if actually used.

For example, if a danger assessment was performed in this case, Andrei Kisliak would have been in jail or on GPS monitoring. If he were on GPS monitoring, perhaps police would have known of his violations and taken them seriously. But he violated the order of protection and posted bail. Police knew, and still no measures were taken to contain him. This sent the message to Vera Kisliak that the system was not going to help in any consistent or effective way to protect her, that she was on her own to combat a monster.

Groups of citizens accompanying a victim to the police station sends the message that we have eyes on the system. It doesn't work without this pressure. We have the right and responsibility to demand law enforcement of orders of protection.

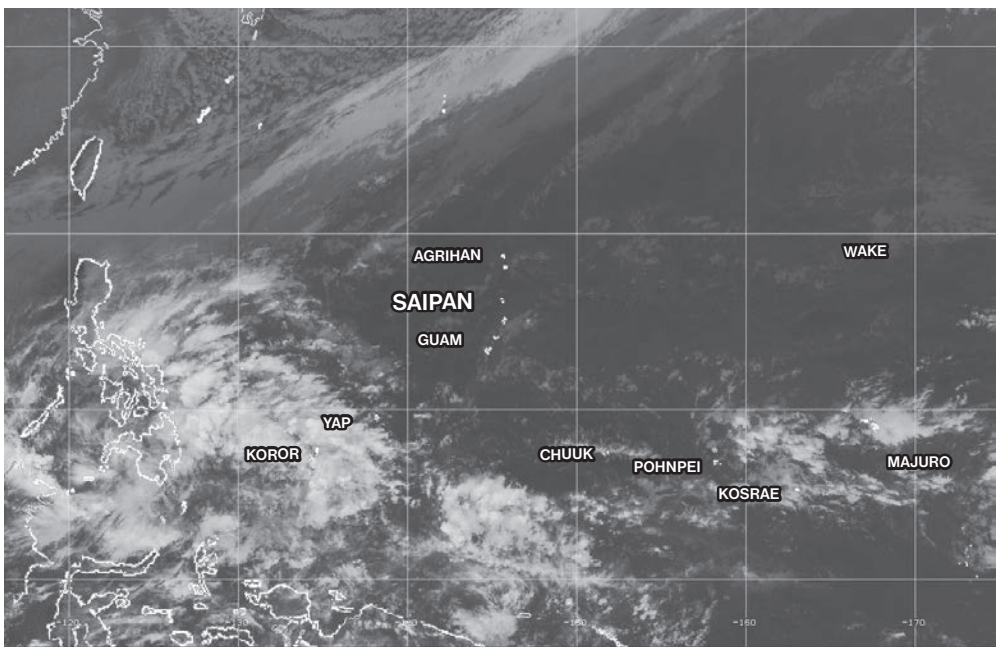
Standing with Vera Kisliak might have made the difference between life and death for her, her children and her mother-in-law. Let's change our noninterventionist attitudes on domestic violence into knowledge that we can make a difference, just by showing up.

# The Weather

## 5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

| TODAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Isolated showers. Mostly sunny | Isolated showers. Mostly sunny | A 40 percent chance of showers. Partly sunny | Showers likely. Cloudy | Showers likely. Cloudy |
| 83º 78º | 83º 78º | 83º 78º | 82º 78º | 82º 78º |

## YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE




**PICTURE TIME: 8:33 AM, MONDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2022**

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Radar and satellite imagery this morning shows only partly cloudy skies and isolated showers across the Marianas this morning. Ipan, Ritidian and Tanapag buoys are reporting combined seas around 8 feet, while altimetry data overnight still showed 9 to 10 foot seas just east of the Marianas.

*Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/*

| MICRONESIA | ▲ ▼ °F | |
|---|---|---|
| Guam and Rota | Cloudy | 84° / 78° |
| Palau | Thunderstorms | 85° / 78° |
| Yap | Thunderstorms | 86° / 79° |
| Chuuk | Thunderstorms | 86° / 80° |
| Pohnpei | Scattered Thunderstorms | 85° / 78° |
| Kosrae | Mostly Cloudy | 85° / 78° |
| Majuro | Thunderstorms | 85° / 80° |

| AROUND THE GLOBE | ▲ ▼ °F | |
|---|---|---|
| Auckland | Thunderstorms | 72° / 60° |
| Beijing | Mostly Sunny | 37° / 18° |
| Hong Kong | Mostly Cloudy | 66° / 57° |
| Honolulu | Thunderstorms/Wind | 73° / 69° |
| London | Sunny | 43° / 34° |
| Los Angeles | Sunny | 66° / 45° |
| Manila | Scattered Thunderstorms | 84° / 76° |
| Melbourne | Rain | 66° / 55° |
| Miami | Mostly Sunny | 78° / 71° |
| New York | Sunny | 40° / 31° |
| Osaka | Mostly Sunny | 50° / 35° |
| Paris | Partly Cloudy | 39° / 28° |
| Busan | Mostly Sunny | 47° / 39° |
| Rome | Mostly Sunny | 55° / 39° |
| Salem | Partly Cloudy | 70° / 54° |
| San Francisco | Mostly Cloudy | 50° / 41° |
| Seoul | Partly Cloudy | 36° / 28° |
| Tokyo | Sunny | 50° / 35° |
| Washington, DC | Mostly Sunny | 42° / 26° |

| DAY | SUNRISE | SUNSET |
|---|---|---|
| Today | 6:37 AM | 5:51 PM |
| Wednesday | 6:37 AM | 5:51 PM |
| Thursday | 6:38 AM | 5:52 PM |
| Friday | 6:38 AM | 5:52 PM |
| Saturday | 6:39 AM | 5:53 PM |

| DAY | MOONRISE | MOONSET | MOONRISE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Today | 2:37 AM | 2:58 PM | - |
| Wednesday | 3:28 AM | 3:36 PM | - |
| Thursday | 4:22 AM | 4:17 PM | - |
| Friday | 5:19 AM | 5:03 PM | - |
| Saturday | 6:21 AM | 5:55 PM | - |

| TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY | | FEET |
|---|---|---|
| 5:42 AM | High Tide | 1.38 |
| 10:39 AM | Low Tide | 0.84 |
| 4:26 PM | High Tide | 1.76 |
| 11:44 PM | Low Tide | -0.30 |

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

CUSTOMER SERVICE For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740.

SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, Saipan Tribune offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769.
E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

## FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2022

### DEPARTURES

**SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA117 | 9:50AM | 10:35AM | Daily |

**SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA824 | 7:05AM | 9:45AM | 1, 3, 5 |

**GUAM-MANILA (MNL)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| PR 111 | 6:00AM | 7:45AM | Daily |
| UA193 | 7:55PM | 11:50PM | 2, 5 via Palau |
| UA183 | 8:00PM | 9:50PM | Daily |

**SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA117/183 | 9:50AM | 9:50PM | Daily via Guam |
| UA117/193 | 9:50AM | 11:50PM | 2, 5 via Guam, Palau |
| OZ624/701 | 3:40PM | 10:35AM+1 | 3,6 via Incheon |

**SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| OZ624 | 3:40PM | 7:40PM | 3, 6 |
| TW308 | 4:30PM | 8:20PM | 3, 4, 6, 7 |
| 7C3405 | 4:35PM | 8:25PM | Daily |

**SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| BX621 | 3:10PM | 6:30PM | 3, 7 |

### ARRIVALS

**GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA174 | 8:00AM | 8:46AM | Daily |

**NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA825 | 9:25PM | 2:00AM+1 | 2, 4, 7 |

**MANILA (MNL)-GUAM**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| PR110 | 10:05PM | 3:55AM+1 | Daily |
| UA184 | 10:55PM | 4:45AM+1 | 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 |
| UA192 | 10:40PM | 6:30AM+1 | 2, 5 via Palau |
| UA184 | 12:40AM | 6:30AM | 3, 6 |

**MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| UA189/174 | 12:40AM | 8:46AM+1 | 3, 6 via Guam |
| UA184/174 | 10:55PM | 8:46AM+1 | 1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam |
| UA192/174 | 10:40PM | 8:46AM+1 | 2, 5 via Palau, Guam |
| OZ704/623 | 11:50PM | 2:40PM+1 | 2, 5 via Incheon |

**INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| OZ623 | 9:00AM | 2:40PM | 3, 6 |
| TW307 | 10:00AM | 3:30PM | 3, 4, 6, 7 |
| 7C3406 | 10:10AM | 3:30PM | Daily |

**BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| BX622 | 8:00AM | 1:10PM | 3, 7 |

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

## MARIANAS SOUTHERN AIRWAYS

INITIAL DAILY FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF AUGUST 18, 2022

**SAIPAN TO TINIAN**

| DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|
| 7:00 A.M. | 7:15 A.M. | (Except Sundays) |
| 9:50 A.M. | 10:05 A.M. | |
| 4:00 P.M. | 4:15 P.M. | (Except Saturdays) |

**TINIAN TO SAIPAN**

| DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|
| 7:35 A.M. | 7:50 A.M. | (Except Sundays) |
| 10:25 A.M. | 10:40 A.M. | |
| 4:35 P.M. | 4:50 P.M. | (Except Saturdays) |

**SAIPAN TO ROTA**

| DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|
| 8:10 A.M. | 8:40 A.M. | |
| 1:45 P.M. | 2:15 P.M. | |

**ROTA TO SAIPAN**

| DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|
| 9:00 A.M. | 9:30 A.M. | |
| 2:35 P.M. | 3:05 P.M. | |

**SAIPAN TO GUAM**

| DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|
| 11:10 A.M. | 12:00 P.M. | |
| 5:15 P.M. | 6:05 P.M. | |

**GUAM TO SAIPAN**

| DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|
| 12:30 P.M. | 1:20 P.M. | |
| 6:40 P.M. | 7:30 P.M. | |

## STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

**SAIPAN TO ROTA**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1301 | 8:30 | 9:00 | Daily |
| 1302 | 11:00 | 11:30 | Mon/Wed/Fri |
| 1302 | 12:00 | 12:30 | Tues/Thurs/ Sat/Sun |
| 1303 | 15:30 | 16:00 | Daily |

**ROTA TO SAIPAN**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3101 | 9:30 | 10:00 | Daily |
| 3102 | 13:00 | 13:30 | Tues/Thurs/ Sat/Sun |
| 3102 | 14:00 | 14:30 | Mon/Wed/Fri |
| 3103 | 16:30 | 17:00 | Daily |

**ROTA TO GUAM**

| LIGHT # | DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3401 | 12:00 | 12:30 | Mon/Wed/Fri |

**GUAM TO ROTA**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4301 | 13:00 | 13:30 | Mon/Wed/Fri |

**SAIPAN TO TINIAN**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1202 | 8:00 | 8:15 | Daily |
| 1203 | 9:00 | 9:15 | Daily |
| 1204 | 10:00 | 10:15 | Daily |
| 1208 | 14:00 | 14:15 | Daily |
| 1209 | 15:00 | 15:15 | Daily |
| 1210 | 16:00 | 16:15 | Daily |
| 1211 | 17:00 | 17:15 | Daily |

**TINIAN TO SAIPAN**

| FLIGHT # | DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2102 | 8:30 | 8:45 | Daily |
| 2103 | 9:30 | 9:45 | Daily |
| 2104 | 10:30 | 10:45 | Daily |
| 2108 | 14:30 | 14:45 | Daily |
| 2109 | 15:30 | 15:45 | Daily |
| 2110 | 16:30 | 16:45 | Daily |
| 2111 | 17:30 | 17:45 | Daily |

# Yutu debris site cleanup on Tinian is demobilized

The cleanup of the fire-impacted Super Typhoon Yutu debris site on Tinian is now in its final stages.

The site has been successfully cleared of metal and other debris, and a sampling analysis plan has been finalized, and the contractor will soon conduct a final round of soil testing to detect whether Chemicals of Potential Concern, or COPCs, are present in quantities that exceed environmental thresholds.

**» Final round of soil testing to be conducted**

Assessing potential contamination and addressing contamination is an important part of this cleanup effort, as it is critical to ensure that these potential COPCs do not threaten the health and safety of the Tinian community. Over the next six months, the contractor and members of the Inter-island Solid Waste Task Force will continue to work together to determine the best course of action in handling, transport, and disposal of any contaminated soil found to exceed environmental health and safety standards at the debris site and complete the site cleanup.

From early July to mid-October, Allied Pacific Environmental Consulting, Inc., the contractor for this emergency debris cleanup project, completed the recycling and transporting of recyclable metal waste and cleared the site of other debris. The ongoing effort to clean up remaining Yutu debris at the holding site on Tinian was fast-tracked when a fire that appears to have been caused by summer heat conditions prompted the declaration of a state of emergency on June 23, 2022. ***(PR)***

An Oct. 14, 2022, photo of the Super Typhoon Yutu Debris site on Tinian, which was impacted by a fire earlier this year. From early July to mid-October, Allied Pacific Environmental Consulting, Inc., the contractor for this emergency debris cleanup project, completed the recycling and transporting of recyclable metal waste and cleared the site of other debris.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com**

# United Airlines Fantasy Flight flies 60 children from Rainbows for All Children to 'North Pole'

United Airlines welcomes60 children and their chaperones aboard flight UA2764, a United Boeing 737-800 aircraft, for the annual Fantasy Flight tradition last Dec. 15.
UNITED AIRLINES

**GUAM—**United Airlines' Fantasy Flight is Guam's most magical flight of the year, and in 2022, United's employee volunteers teamed up with The Super American Circus to put on an unforgettable experience for the children of Rainbows for All Children-Guam, an international nonprofit peer support group for children and adults who have experienced life-altering crises or loss.

The annual Fantasy Flight tradition, which took place on Dec. 15, welcomed 60 children and their chaperones aboard flight UA2764, a United Boeing 737-800 aircraft, "bound" for the North Pole. After takeoff, United flight attendants danced and sang for the children and navigated their carts down the aisle to deliver United gift bags and goodies to every child. For many of the children, Fantasy Flight was the first time they had boarded an airplane and took to the skies.

**» United Guam teams up with The Super American Circus to create an unforgettable experience for children**

"Fantasy Flight is an important 32-year company tradition for United. It allows us to do what we do best to bring holiday cheer to those who need it most. This year marks our eighth Fantasy Flight event in Guam, and our team continues to find ways to surprise the children. They are the reason we host this event each year," said Sam Shinohara, United managing director for Airport Operations - Asia/Pacific.

United partnered with The Super American Circus to add next-level holiday magic to the event. The Super American Circus created a 30-minute holiday show specially for Rainbows for All Children that included jugglers, acrobats, and lively clowns.

Shinohara said, "We are excited to say that we are the first Fantasy Flight event to join forces with a circus. Seeing the children's eyes light up in amazement is something we won't forget."

In addition to the dynamic circus show, the event included performances by the St. Anthony School Honor Choir, singer/songwriter Isabella Santiago, violinist Bethany Scull, costumed superheroes from Steel Athletics, and SKIP Entertainment. The children were treated to holiday activities, face painting, Happy Meals from McDonald's of Guam, and refreshments before receiving their presents from Santa. ***(PR)***

**A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com**

# Business

## Enjoy a festive and relaxing Christmas at Tsubaki Tower

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Tsubaki Tower is dressed up for the holidays and invites residents to book their holiday staycation and Christmas dinners on Dec. 24 and 25.

**TUMON, Guam**—The Tsubaki Tower welcomes Guam residents to enjoy a relaxing Christmas season in Tumon. The Tsubaki Tower is dressed up for the holidays and invites residents to book their holiday staycation and Christmas dinners on Dec. 24 and 25, enjoy a glass of wine with a view at La Cantina, and indulge in holiday goodies from the Hinekka Deli.

### Christmas Dinner at Milano Grill and Casa Oceano

According to Joel Davis, assistant general manager at The Tsubaki Tower, the resort's holiday menus for Milano Grill and Casa Oceano will satisfy the palate and delight the senses.

The chefs at Milano Grill present a special Christmas multi-course menu with premium wine pairings on Dec. 24 and 25 for $250 per adult plus a 10% service charge.

Davis said, "We've designed the menus to offer dishes and wines that you have not yet tried at The Tsubaki Tower. The holidays are perfect for indulging in delectable dishes and enjoying that unforgettable glass of wine. It's a time to relax and celebrate, and we're ready to deliver a wonderful Christmas experience in a festive and cozy atmosphere."

The culinary team at Casa Oceano is offering 10 distinct live stations. The Carving and Hot Food Stations will serve Bone-in Ribeye, Cowboy Steaks, Bone-in Kalbi, and Pork Ribs. The Hot Food Station highlights include Garlic Butter Lobster Tails, Grilled Wagyu Steak, Marinated Lamb Racks, and Jumbo Prawns. The beverage menu highlights a variety of premium free-flowing wines, sparkling wines, beers, and whiskey, vodka, and rum beverages in addition to soft drinks, coffee, and tea.

The cost per person at Casa Oceano for dinner on Dec. 24 and lunch and dinner on Dec. 25 is $125 for adults and $75 for children 6-11 years old. A 10% service charge will be added. The full menu can be found on The Tsubaki Tower's Facebook and Instagram pages (@thetsubakitower). Reservations can be made by phone at 671-969-5200.

### La Cantina

La Cantina, the resort's wine bar with an unforgettable island view from the 27th floor, offers inventive cocktails, premium spirits, beers, and live music. La Cantina is open on Christmas Eve from 5pm to 10pm.

### Hinekka Deli

Located at the lobby level, the Hinekka Deli will delight children of all ages with its holiday pastries, cakes, and desserts and expansive coffee and tea menus. Guests can enjoy their goodies in the lobby and take photos in front of the resort's unique floral tree. Hinekka Deli is open 24 hours.

### Holiday Staycation Package

December staycation packages for Dec. 24 and 25 are now available for booking. The Tsubaki Tower announced that it is offering room packages for two that include a meal for two at Casa Ocean for Christmas Eve Dinner, Christmas Lunch, or Christmas Dinner.

### Camellia Room Package for Two ($550 + 11% tax)

Camellia Club Room Package for Two ($680 + 11% tax). This Club Room package also includes Club Lounge benefits. Rooms are limited.

### Reservations

PHR member benefits at all food and beverage outlets are welcome. The Tsubaki Tower team is ready to receive reservations for all restaurants and Holiday Staycation packages. Reservations can be made by calling 671-969-5200.

### The Tsubaki Journey

The Tsubaki Tower is Guam's newest luxury resort experience. The Tsubaki Tower's mission is to be an authentic ambassador of Guam's culture, natural beauty, and unique history. Located along the shores of stunning Gun Beach, the 27-story resort will offer guests panoramic views of Guam's famous sunsets and the warm blues of the Pacific Ocean. The resort is nestled in the northern part of Tumon Bay and features 340 breathtaking oceanfront rooms and suites, all within walking distance of Guam's most beautiful white-sand beaches and a world-class marine preserve. The resort features two types of dining, three types of bars, a lobby lounge, deli, club lounge, swimming pools, garden plaza, multifunction room, and a chapel in the sky. For further information about The Tsubaki Tower visit tsubakitower.premierhotel-group.com/guam/ or engage with them on Instagram and Facebook (@thetsubakitower).

### About Premier Hotel Group

Premier Hotel Groupchas been managing hotels for more than 15 years. PHG is a member of Ken Corporation Group, a pioneer in the high-end real estate rental market in metropolitan areas. Currently, PHG owns and operates a total of 32 hotels – 23 properties throughout major cities in Japan, such as Tokyo, Osaka, and Okinawa, and nine hotels in Guam, Saipan, and the U.S. in collaboration with several international hotel chains. For more information about Premier Hotel Group, visit premierhotel-group.com/eng/. ***(PR)***

# Nation

AHEAD OF EXPECTED MIGRANT SURGE

## US border cities strained

**EL PASO, Texas** (AP)—Along the U.S. southern border, two cities—El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juarez in Mexico—prepared Sunday for a surge of as many as 5,000 new migrants a day as pandemic-era immigration restrictions expire this week, setting in motion plans for emergency housing, food and other essentials.

On the Mexican side of the international border, only heaps of discarded clothes, shoes and backpacks remained Sunday morning on the banks of the Rio Grande River, where until a couple of days ago hundreds of people were lining up to turn themselves in to U.S. officials. One young man from Ecuador stood uncertain on the Mexican side; he asked two journalists if they knew anything about what would happen if he turned himself in without having a sponsor in the U.S., and then gingerly removed sneakers and socks and hopped across the low water.

On the American side, by a small fence guarded by several Border Patrol vehicles, he joined a line of a dozen people who stood waiting with no U.S. officials in sight.

El Paso County Judge Ricardo Samaniego told The Associated Press on Sunday that the region, home to one of the busiest border crossings in the country, was coordinating housing and relocation efforts with groups and other cities, as well as calling on the state and federal government for humanitarian help. The area is preparing for an onslaught of new arrivals that could double their daily numbers once public health rule Title 42 ends on Wednesday.

The rule has been used to deter more than 2.5 million migrants from crossing since March 2020.

At a migrant shelter not far from the river in a poor Ciudad Juárez neighborhood, Carmen Aros, 31, knew little about U.S. policies. In fact, she said she'd heard the border might close on Dec. 21.

She fled the cartel violence in the Mexican state of Zacatecas a month ago, right after her fifth daughter was born and her husband went missing. The Methodist pastor who runs the Buen Samaritano shelter put her on a list to be paroled into the United States and she waits every week to be called.

"They told me there was asylum in Juarez, but in truth, I didn't know much," she said on the bunk bed she shared with the girls. "We got here … and now let's see if the government of the United States can resolve our case."

At a vast shelter run by the Mexican government in a former Ciudad Juárez factory, dozens of migrants watched the World Cup final Sunday on two TVs while a visiting team of doctors from El Paso treated many who had come down with respiratory illness in the cold weather.

Constantly changing policies make it hard to plan, said Dylan Corbett, director of the Hope Border Institute, a Catholic organization helping migrants in both El Paso and Juarez. The group started the clinic two months ago.

"You have a lot of pent-up pain," Corbett said. "I'm afraid of what's going to happen." With government policies in disarray, "the majority of the work falls to faith communities to pick up the pieces and deal with the consequences."

Just a couple blocks across the border, sleet fell in El Paso as about 80 huddled migrants ate tacos that volunteers grilled up. Temperatures in the region were set to drop below freezing this week.

## Arctic air will blast much of US just before Christmas

**ATLANTA** (AP)—Forecasters are warning of treacherous holiday travel and life-threatening cold for much of the nation as an arctic air mass blows into the already-frigid southern United States.

"We're looking at much-below normal temperatures, potentially record-low temperatures leading up to the Christmas holiday," said Zack Taylor, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service.

The polar air arrives as an earlier storm system gradually winds down in the northeastern U.S. after burying parts of the region under two feet (61 centimeters) of snow. More than 80,000 customers in New England were still without power on Sunday morning, according to poweroutage.us, which tracks outages across the country.

The incoming artic front brings "extreme and prolonged freezing conditions for southern Mississippi and southeast Louisiana," the National Weather Service in a special weather statement Sunday.

By Thursday night, temperatures will plunge as low as 13 degrees (minus 10.6 Celsius) in Jackson, Mississippi; and around 5 degrees (minus 15 Celsius) in Nashville, Tennessee, the National Weather Service predicts.

For much of the U.S., the winter weather will get worse before it gets better.

The coming week has the potential for "the coldest air of the season" as the strong artic front marches across the eastern two-thirds of the country in the days before Christmas, according to the latest forecasts from the federal Weather Prediction Center in College Park, Maryland.

The center warned of a "massive expanse of frigid temperatures from the Northern Rockies/Northern Plains to the Midwest through the middle of the week, and then reaching the Gulf Coast and much of the Eastern U.S. by Friday and into the weekend."

The arctic air was already pouring into Montana Sunday night, but that wasn't deterring residents from ice fishing and hunting coyotes.

Ice fishing will continue through the cold blast, since the temperatures won't scare away anglers there — "not the hard-core ones anyway," said Jason Mundel, who runs the Ripp'n Lipps Guide Service in northeastern Montana.

Mundel said it was 4 degrees (minus 15.6 Celsius) there Sunday night, and a coyote contest was still going on in a nearby community. "Those guys are just out in the elements, just bundled up," he said.

In Atlanta, where temperatures are set to drop below freezing early Monday morning, forecasters warn of even colder air by late in the week, according to the National Weather Service office in Peachtree City, Georgia. The low Friday night in Atlanta will be around 13 degrees (minus 10.6 Celsius) with the high temperature Saturday still below the freezing mark at around 29 degrees (minus 1.7 Celsius), the Weather Service projects.

Freezing temperatures can take lives in an instant — a heartbreaking reality that Atlanta homeless advocate George Chidi knows firsthand.

He went to check on a woman with severe mental health issues in downtown Atlanta earlier this year, and found she had died of suspected hypothermia just hours earlier. Her body was found outside the Greyhound bus station, which is open 24 hours in the heart of downtown Atlanta, he said.

"She died within 100 feet of three heated buildings," Chidi said.

# Asia

## North Korea fires 2 ballistic missiles

**SEOUL, South Korea** (AP)—North Korea test-fired a pair of ballistic missiles with a potential range of striking Japan on Sunday, in a possible protest of Tokyo's adoption of a new security strategy to push for more offensive footing against North Korea and China.

» Pair capable of reaching Japan

The launches came two days after the North claimed to have performed a key test needed to build a more mobile, powerful intercontinental ballistic missile designed to strike the U.S. mainland.

The two missiles traveled from the country's northwest Tongchangri area about 500 kilometers (310 miles) at a maximum altitude of 550 kilometers (340 miles) before landing in the waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan, according to the South Korean and Japanese governments.

South Korea's military described both missiles as medium-range weapons that were launched at a steep angle, suggesting they could have traveled farther if fired at a standard trajectory. North Korea usually tests medium- and longer-range missiles at a high angle to avoid neighboring countries, though it fired an intermediate-range missile over Japan in October, forcing Tokyo to issue evacuation alerts and halt trains.

In an emergency meeting, top South Korean security officials deplored North Korea's continued provocations that they said came despite "the plight of its citizens moaning in hunger and cold due to a serious food shortage." They said South Korea will boost a trilateral security cooperation with the U.S. and Japan, according to South Korea's presidential office.

Japanese Vice Defense Minister Toshiro Ino separately criticized North Korea for threatening the safety of Japan, the region and the international community. The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said the launches highlight the destabilizing impact of North Korea's unlawful weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs. It said the U.S. commitments to the defense of South Korea and Japan "remain ironclad."

Kwon Yong Soo, a former professor at Korea National Defense University in South Korea, said North Korea likely tested its Pukguksong-2 missile, a solid-fueled, land-based variant of its Pukguksong family of missiles that can be fired from submarines. Kwon said that flight details of the weapons tested Sunday were similar to those of the Pukguksong-2's two known tests in 2017.

Kwon said the Pukguksong-2 can fly about 1,200-2,000 kilometers (745-1,240 miles) if it's launched at a normal trajectory, a range enough to strike key facilities in Japan, including U.S. military installations there. Some experts say the Pukguksong-2 is nuclear-capable.

"North Korea staged an armed protest with a land version of a submarine-launched ballistic missile that it can fire quickly in response" to the Japanese national security strategy, Kwon said.

Some observers say North Korea might have tested a newly developed medium-range missile that can still reach Japan.

On Friday, the Japanese government adopted a national security strategy that would allow it to carry out preemptive strikes and double its military spending to give itself more offensive footing against threats from neighboring China and North Korea. That was a major break from its strictly self-defense-only postwar principle. The Japanese strategy names China as "the biggest strategic challenge" — before North Korea and Russia — to Japan's efforts to ensure peace, safety and stability.

Japan's Defense Ministry said Sunday it detected a fleet of five Chinese warships including an aircraft carrier off the southern Japanese island of Okidaitojima the previous day. Ministry officials said fighter jets and helicopters were engaging in takeoff and landing exercises on the Chinese carrier and that Japan responded by scrambling fighter jets and dispatching a destroyer.

### ASIAN BRIEFS

#### Thai navy ship sinks, rescue underway for sailors in water

**BANGKOK** (AP)—A Thai navy ship sunk in the Gulf of Thailand and ships and helicopters were working Monday to rescue sailors from the water.

As of midmorning, 75 sailors had been rescued and 31 were still in the water, the navy said.

Strong winds blew seawater onto the HTMS Sukhothai corvette and knocked out its electrical system Sunday evening. The Royal Thai Navy dispatched three frigates and two helicopters with mobile pumping machines to try to assist the disabled ship by removing the seawater but it couldn't do so because of the strong winds.

The loss of power allowed more seawater to flow into the vessel, causing it to list and sink.

It occurred while the warship was on patrol at sea 32 kilometers (20 miles) from the pier at Bangsaphan district in Prachuap Khiri Khan province.

#### Philippine Communist Party founder Sison dies in exile at 83

**MANILA, Philippines** (AP)—Jose Maria Sison, the founder of the Communist Party of the Philippines, whose armed wing has been waging one of Asia's longest-running insurgencies, has died. He was 83.

Sison died peacefully late Friday after two weeks of confinement in a hospital in Utrecht, the Netherlands, the party's spokesman, Marco Valbuena, said in a statement on Saturday. The cause of death was not disclosed.

Sison had lived in self-exile in The Netherlands since then-President Corazon Aquino released him from detention in 1986, shortly after the "People Power" revolt overthrew dictator Ferdinand Marcos, the father and namesake of the current Philippine president.

#### Malaysia landslide death toll rises to 24, 9 more missing

**BATANG KALI, Malaysia** (AP)—Rescuers on Saturday found the bodies of a woman and two children, raising the death toll from a landslide on an unlicensed campground in Malaysia to 24 with nine others still missing.

Selangor state fire chief Norazam Khamis told reporters the bodies of a mother and son were found buried under a meter (3 feet) of mud and debris. The body of a little girl was discovered later. He said there was hope of finding survivors if they clung on to piles or branches or rocks with pockets of air but that chances were slim.

Authorities said 94 people were sleeping at the camp site on an organic farm early Friday when the dirt tumbled from a road about 30 meters (100 feet) above them and covered about 1 hectare (3 acres). Most were families enjoying a short vacation during the yearend school break.

# World

## Jewish festival of lights begins in Ukraine as battles continue

AP

Ukrainian soldiers rest near their position in Bakhmut, Donetsk region, Ukraine, Saturday, Dec. 17, 2022.

**KYIV, Ukraine** (AP)—Jews in Ukraine waging a "war between darkness and light" lit a giant menorah on Sunday night to start the eight-day Hanukkah holiday as tens of thousands remained without electricity and Russia's nearly 10-month war produced new victims.

Dozens gathered in Maidan Independence Square in the capital, Kyiv, at sundown to light the first candle of what local Jewish leaders say is Europe's tallest menorah. Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko joined ambassadors from Israel, the United States, Japan, Poland, Canada and France in a ceremony organized by the Federation of Jewish Communities of Ukraine. They sang blessings under the flames of the menorah, which towered over the crowd and passing cars in frigid weather.

Rabbi Mayer Stambler, a leader of Ukraine's Jewish community, drew parallels to the story of Hanukkah, an eight-day commemoration of the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem by the Maccabees after their victory over the Syrians more than 2,000 years ago. When only enough oil was available to keep the temple candles lit for one day and night, the oil inexplicably burned for eight days and eight nights — a feat now celebrated as the Jewish Festival of Lights.

"We are actually now living through the same situation," said Stambler, drawing a parallel with the current blackouts in Ukraine that Russian bombardments have caused. "This is a war between darkness and light."

In congratulating the world's Jews on Hanukkah, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who is Jewish, also noted the holiday's inspiration for his people.

"Those who were fewer defeated those who were more. Light defeated darkness. It will be the same this time," he vowed in a video address late Sunday.

Among those watching the Kyiv menorah lighting was 47-year-old Viktoria Herman, who said the festival of lights brought her hope during the December days with the least sunlight of the year.

"There will be light and everything will be fine for everyone. And finally the war will end," she said.

The Israeli ambassador to Ukraine, Michael Brodsky, said: "I wish for the people of Ukraine all of that which Hanukkah symbolizes. I wish there was light on every Ukrainian house ... and I wish you victory."

## Jesuits ask victims to come forward in artist abuse case

**VATICAN CITY** (AP)—Pope Francis' Jesuit order on Sunday asked any more victims to come forward with complaints against a famous Jesuit artist who was essentially let off the hook by the Vatican twice despite devastating testimony by women who said he sexually and spiritually abused them.

The Jesuits asked for new evidence against the Rev. Marko Ivan Rupnik, and offered a timeline about his case in an effort to tamp down the scandal.

The Slovenian priest is relatively unknown among rank-and-file Catholics but is well known in the hierarchy because he is one of the church's most sought-after artists. His mosaics decorate chapels, churches and basilicas around the globe.

The scandal exploded this past week after the Jesuits admitted he had been excommunicated for having committed one of the gravest crimes in the Catholic Church — using the confessional to absolve a woman with whom he had engaged in sexual activity.

He was declared excommunicated in May 2020, but the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith lifted the excommunication later that month after he repented, an unusually quick turnaround for such a serious violation.

A year later, the same Congregation decided not to prosecute him for another allegation of spiritual and sexual abuse of a former nun, declaring the statute of limitations had expired. The Congregation, which routinely waives the statute of limitations, is headed by a Jesuit prefect, has a Jesuit sex crimes prosecutor and a former No. 2 who lived in Rupnik's Jesuit community.

The Congregation has not responded to requests for information about the case, which has exposed the Vatican's general refusal to consider spiritual and sexual abuse of adult women as a crime that must be punished. Rather, the Vatican has long considered such abuse a mere lapse of priestly chastity that can be forgiven, without considering the trauma it causes victims.

# Overdrive

## Beyond fuel economy, the 2023 Toyota Prius is actually fun-to-drive

By LARRY PRINTZ
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

TOYOTA/TNS
The 2023 Toyota Prius. Toyota's designers created a car that looked sporty as well as aerodynamic, and challenged engineers to create a driving experience that matched the new car's looks.

TOYOTA/TNS
The 2023 Toyota Prius has six USB-C ports, an 8-inch Toyota multimedia touchscreen, wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto.

The 2022 Toyota Prius has the design presence of an alien life form, with an interior ambiance that never lets you forget that weight is the enemy, as every unnecessary gram of weight has been eliminated. It's as if the vehicle was engineered of balsa wood and crepe paper. It has always been such, and with good reason.

According to the Toyota Prius' chief engineer, the car was considered little more than a commodity car by Toyota CEO Akio Toyoda, a car built to a price to minimize CO2 emissions, not maximize thrills. The result was a fairly joyless car to drive, unless you get your kicks from maximizing fuel economy. Certainly, the Prius was no speed demon, requiring 9.8 seconds to reach 60 mph.

But that's all changed for 2023, as the car's mission has changed within the Toyota lineup. No longer a unique offering, as most Toyota models offer a hybrid variant, Toyota's designers created a car that looked sporty as well as aerodynamic, and challenged engineers to create a driving experience that matched the new car's looks. The result is a vehicle that Toyota management hopes has enough emotional appeal to lure buyers with its design, more powerful driveline and newfound handling finesse.

The result is a Prius that delivers some semblance of driving thrills, thanks to the total redesign. Certainly, its look is far more appealing. For the first time, Toyota has eschewed its anti-design bias in favor of one that's slick, sporty and appealing. It's so good in fact, it elicits spontaneous enthusiasm from bystanders.

Created in Japan, the 2023 Toyota Prius is built using the corporate TNGA-C platform that allows the car to sport a lower center of gravity, reduced weight and increased rigidity compared to the 2022 model. It also means that this Prius has a wider vehicle stance, while providing a 2-inch lower roofline and lower driving position, imparting a sportier profile.

That change is very apparent when you climb inside, as there's less headroom than before, although the front seats are wide and comfortable with a commanding driving position. Front seat space is ample, but rear seat legroom depends on the generosity of front seat passengers. Clearly, design took some precedent over practicality. That said, cargo space is still a generous 20.3 cubic feet.

As in the current model, the instrument cluster sits far forward, but it's no longer centered in the cabin but rather centered in front of the driver. But its placement is not adjustable and can become partially blocked by the top of the steering wheel unless the wheel is tilted all of the way down. The design suggests that Toyota wanted an instrument cluster with the functionality of a head-up display. Elsewhere, the cabin's ergonomics are spot-on—including its tech package.

When it comes to tech, there are six USB-C ports, an 8-inch Toyota multimedia touchscreen, wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, and a 4G Wi-Fi hotspot for up to five devices are standard. A 12.3-inch multimedia touchscreen, cloud-based and navigation are optional. There's even ambient lighting—a sign of extravagance unknown in a Prius.

Also unknown? High mileage wasn't the designers' first priority; design and driving experience were. In fact, its aerodynamic efficiency has declined somewhat. But fuel economy is still as high as 57 mpg, the best of any hybrid.

When you sit in the pilot's seat, the first thing that strikes you is the surprising amount of steering feel; it's far better that the fourth-generation Prius. Nicely weighted and satisfyingly quick, it actually has some road feel, a rarity in modern cars.

As before, the driveline has different drive modes, and this time around, it noticeably changes torque distribution and steering but not suspension. Nevertheless, the Prius feels planted, with minimal body lean in corners. Push this puppy hard and you'll find it obediently tackles corners at a higher speed than possible with any prior model. It makes for a driving experience that's actually fun—a word you'd never use in conjunction with any Prius.

Acceleration is sufficient, and the overall driving experience is a sea change from what's come before. A larger 2.0-liter engine and a revised hybrid system generates a whopping 60% more horsepower, up to 194 horsepower with front-wheel drive, 196 horsepower with all-wheel drive. It's no longer engineered solely for high mileage at the expense of all else.

For the first time Toyota has eschewed the anti-design, anti-performance mantra that has always marked the Prius' disposition. It's now been minimized to allow driving fun to join the party, while still returning 50+ mpg, making it the first Prius you may actually want to drive.

### NUTS & BOLTS

- **2023 Toyota Prius**
- **Base prices:** $27,450-$35,865
- **Powertrain:** 2.0-Liter DOHC Atkinson Cycle four-cylinder engine and 83-kWh electric motor
- **Horsepower/Torque:** 194/152 pound-feet
- **EPA fuel economy (city/highway):** 52/52 mpg
- **Fuel required:** 87 Octane
- **Length/Width/Height:** 181.1/70.2/56.3 inches
- **Ground clearance:** 6 inches
- **Curb weight:** 3,285 pounds
- **Cargo capacity:** 20.3 cubic feet

## Magic carpet?

**Q: Years ago, a neighbor who was also a mechanic told us to put a rug on our concrete garage floor, underneath the motor, to prevent moisture from prematurely aging the engine. Is there any evidence that this does in fact have a positive effect on a car's engine? We have been recycling old rugs from the house and putting them beneath the motor for years. Does this do anything except liven up the interior design of our garage floor?**

**D.H., Chicago**

**A:** Huh? I have a hunch your old mechanic was trying to pull the wool, er, carpet over your eyes. If moisture prematurely damaged engines, highways would be paved with curb-to-curb Karastan or at least Olefin Berber for longer wear. Of course, this may impede snow removal in the winter.

■■■

**Q: We have a 2017 Subaru Outback that has developed a tear on the bottom of the driver's seat. Subaru says it is out of warranty. The car is less than 5 years old and has fewer than 35,000 miles. They've offered a "goodwill" coupon that will cover the part only. Do you think we should go ahead and replace the seat cover with the OEM part and pay the service fee at the dealership to install it? I'm wondering if it will just tear again in three or four years.**

**R.T., Cupertino, California**

**A:** Vinyl seat covers are prone to wear cracks and tears. There are rip repair kits available from 3M and others. I have used them, but the repair has never totally blended in and disappeared. I recently bought a roll of Neaylfe self-adhesive tape to repair my TV-viewing recliner. So far, so good and it looks good. You may choose to replace the seat cover with a genuine Subaru cover and have it installed by an independent upholster. Check around for prices.

■■■

**Q: I have a 2019 Subaru Legacy approaching the end of its warranty. I paid for an extended warranty, and they tell me I need to keep all service records to keep my warranty in effect. Dealerships give me the runaround and only tell me what's "recommended." What is the minimum service required to keep my warranty in effect?**

**B.F., Pahrump, Nevada**

**A:** All you need to do is follow the maintenance schedule found in your owner's manual. If you rack up more miles than the book lists, just keep repeating the routine. You may keep a record in your book, but you must also have proof that the maintenance was performed. Save every service bill. If you do it yourself, keep receipts for the oil, filters, spark plugs and so on. In the event of a dispute, you have proof. If all your service is at the dealership, they have your records on file.

■■■

**Q: I hope you can help me understand why some carmakers have opted to place turn signals in the bumpers of cars. Unless you are the driver right behind this vehicle, you would have no idea someone ahead of you is planning a turn or changing lanes. This would seem to be a hazard. The more information we have as we drive, the more likely we are able to prevent accidents. I realize you cannot solve the problem, but hopefully you can help make people aware of this.**

**D.H., Chicago**

**A:** So long as the turn signals (and all lights) meet the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations, the carmakers are free to place them wherever they please. Yes, they are often dumb designs that do not please the driving public.

### MOTORMOUTH

By BOB WEBER
Tribune News Service

**Bob Weber is a writer and mechanic who became an ASE-certified Master Automobile Technician in 1976. Weber's work has appeared in professional trade magazines and various consumer publications including Consumer Guide and Consumers Digest. Send questions along with name and town to motormouth.tribune@gmail.com.**

# Life & Style

## ‘Avatar 2’ makes waves with $134 million domestic debut

By LINDSEY BAHR
AP FILM WRITER

20TH CENTURY STUDIOS VIA AP

This image released by 20th Century Studios shows Sam Worthington, as Jake Sully, in a scene from “Avatar: The Way of Water.”

“ Avatar: The Way of Water “ didn’t make quite as big of a splash as many assumed it would, but Jaames Cameron’s big budget spectacle still helped breathe life into the box office this weekend. The sequel earned $134 million from North American theaters and $300.5 million internationally for a $434.5 million global debut, according to studio estimates on Sunday.

It tied with “The Batman” as the fourth highest domestic debut of the year, behind “Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness” ($187.4 million in May), “Black Panther: Wakanda Forever,” ($181 million in November) and “Thor: Love and Thunder” ($144.2 million in July).

Expectations were enormous for “Avatar 2,” which carried a reported price tag of over $350 million, the pressure of following up the highest grossing film of all time (thanks in part to various re-releases) over a decade later and the daunting task of propping up an exhibition business that’s still far from normal. Everything “Avatar” is oversized, though: the Na’vi characters, the runtime (a staggering three hours and 12 minutes), the technical advancements and the release strategy from 20th Century Studios and The Walt Disney Co.

Going into the weekend many were expecting a domestic debut of at least $150 million. Some even said $175 or higher, but tracking has also not been as reliable a metric during the pandemic.

Disney saw early that “The Way of Water” was going to be a different kind of beast when they looked at pre-sales. For a normal, spoiler-heavy movie like many Marvel offerings, post-opening weekend sales are usually around 5%. For “The Way of Water,” they were at 20%. In other words, the company knew that tracking was overinflated.

“We’ve got a terrific movie that is playing across all demographics and (has) terrific word of mouth,” said Tony Chambers, the Walt Disney Co.’s executive vice president for theatrical distribution. “We’ve got the screens and we’ve got a clear run. This isn’t about the opening day or the opening weekend. This is about the entire run.”

The film began its international rollout on Wednesday and debuted in North America on Thursday evening. Domestically, “Avatar: The Way of Water” was released in 4,202 theaters on over 12,000 screens, 400 of which were IMAX 3D. The studio and filmmakers bet big on the draw, and higher prices, of the 3D format and premium large screens.

By the end of Friday, “Avatar: The Way of Water” had already earned $53 million in the U.S. and Canada and $180.1 million globally, aided by a China release—the first major Hollywood release in the country since “Minions: The Rise of Gru” in August. It blows “Avatar’s” $26.7 million first day in 2009 out of the water, though that didn’t include Thursday previews.

An estimated 66% of the $435 million opening weekend revenue came from worldwide 3D ticket sales.

Travis Reid, CEO at 3D company RealD, set a “new benchmark for the current 3D marketplace.”

Over $48.8 million of the global total came from IMAX screens alone (1,543 in 80 markets), the company’s second biggest weekend.

“As excited as we are about these early results, we anticipate a long and successful run for ‘Avatar: The Way of Water,’” said Rich Gelfond, CEO of IMAX, in a statement.

As with many ambitious Cameron projects, from “Titanic” to the first “Avatar,” nerves were high for the costly sequel, one of the most expensive of all time, which began production five years ago. It faced repeated delays and weathered The Walt Disney Co’s acquisition of 21st Century Fox in 2019. It’s also one of four “Avatar” sequels Cameron had in mind. Filming on the third movie, which shot simultaneously with “The Way of Water,” is done, with an expected release in December 2024.

In the 13 years since the first film, “Avatar” has also been the butt of jokes for the perception that the biggest movie of all time, one that has made nearly $3 billion, has left a relatively minor footprint in the culture. But even so, critics have largely been on board with “The Way of Water,” not just for the visuals but also for improving on the story of the first. It holds a 78% positive rating from critics on Rotten Tomatoes.

The question of whether “Avatar 2” will earn enough is a complicated one with varied answers. Is it enough for exhibitors, who’ve had several significant hits this year, including “Top Gun: Maverick,” “Black Panther 2” and “Doctor Strange 2,” but are still hurting? Is it enough to justify starting production on fourth and fifth movies? Is it enough for the business as a whole, which is looking at a domestic year-end total in the $8 billion range, as opposed to a pre-pandemic normal of $11 billion?

But like the critics shouting “never doubt James Cameron,” the studio and analysts are singing a similar tune.

“Avatar: The Way of Water” has the benefit of a holiday corridor that is, relatively speaking, lacking in major blockbuster-style movies. Next week sees the debut of Damien Chazelle’s “Babylon” and the family-friendly “Puss in Boots: The Last Wish” but there are no comparable blockbusters until “Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania” in February. The hope is that audiences will continue seeking “Avatar 2” out for weeks and months to come, similar to the first movie.

“Historically James Cameron’s movies are about the long haul, not the opening weekend,” said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore. “’Avatar’ is going to develop its box office over time. It’s about where it will end up months from now.”

1. **“Avatar: The Way of Water,”** $134 million.
2. **“Black Panther: Wakanda Forever,”** $5.4 million.
3. **“Violent Night,”** $5 million.
4. **“Strange World,”** $2.2 million.
5. **“The Menu,”** $1.7 million.
6. **“Devotion,”** $825,000.
7. **“The Fabelmans,”** $750,000.
8. **“Black Adam,”** $500,000.
9. **“I Heard the Bells,”** $308,893.
10. **“Empire of Light,”** $235,000.

## Sister tries to navigate couple’s pending divorce

**DEAR ABBY:** My brother and his husband are getting ready to file for divorce. Before they do, however, they are embarking on a very expensive trip to Italy. It was paid for before the divorce conversations started.

When they travel, I fly into the town where we both grew up, watch their home and dogs and spend time with old friends. Because of the difficulties facing travelers at this time, I like to come into town a few days early, in case there are any delays with my flight, so none of us has to worry about the dogs being alone.

I arrived last night. My brother left for the weekend to spend time with his new gent, and my brother-in-law has invited his new gent over for dinner tonight. My concept of etiquette demands that I be friendly and welcoming of these new people in my brother’s and brother-in-law’s life. However, it is awkward.

Yes, I know divorce happens. But my brother-in-law is just as much a part of my family in my eyes as my brother. Are there any rules or thoughts regarding these new relationships as marriages end and new relationships begin?

**SUPPORTIVE SISTER IN ARIZONA**

**DEAR SISTER: Your brother and his (almost) former husband appear to be handling their soon-to-be dissolution in a civil manner—VERY civil, if they’re taking a pre-divorce European vacation together. If they part as friends, your chances of maintaining a friendship with your (almost) former BIL are better.**

**Keep an open mind and be gracious when you meet the new man in your brother’s life. Avoid gossip, cross your fingers and hope for the best for everyone. That’s all you can do. From the tone of your letter, I am sure you can handle this, Sis.**

■■■■

**DEAR ABBY:** My 57-year-old husband is consumed with watching videos on his cellphone. This is like an addiction for him. He spends hour after hour of his home time with his phone in hand watching all kinds of videos. I have tried talking to him, mentioning that this distraction is taking away from any time we have together. His response to me is a blank look. Nothing more.

I told him once that if we had a child, we certainly would not allow our child to spend anywhere near as much time watching videos on the phone, tablet or computer. Again, a blank look. He doesn’t regard his excessive screen time as a problem. I certainly do. What can I do or say? I’m at the end of my rope.

**SECOND TO THE SCREEN**

**DEAR SECOND: Your husband gives you a blank look because he’s so engrossed in this entertainment he doesn’t realize how much time he’s actually spending on his cellphone. By the way, he isn’t alone in having that problem.**

### DEAR ABBY

**By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN**
*UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE*

*Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.*

**It’s shared by people of all ages. The reasons can range from being caught in “email hell” for hours to using it as a deliberate** escape from reality.

**Because you have reached the end of your rope and have become virtually a widow, tell your husband that if he wants to continue being married, he must consent to marriage counseling. And, if he gives you another blank look, consult a lawyer.**

■■■■

*Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in “The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It.” To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)*

# Pastimes

## Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

SMACK
YES!
I'M SORRY!
NOT AS SORRY AS YOU'RE GOING TO BE!
I THINK AS LONG AS YOU SUFFER FOR YOUR SINS, THEY DONT COUNT.
IT'S YOUR ONLY HOPE.
12-20

## Garfield®

By Jim Davis

## Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

COME ON. HELP ME WRAP SOME GIFTS.
HONEY.
HOW BAD A WRAPPER CAN YOU BE?
LAST TIME I TRIED, IT WAS A... A SITUATION.
SO, THAT SOUNDS FUN!
KATY, PLEASE. THE SMELL OF SCOTCH TAPE GIVES ME FLASHBACKS.
12-20

## The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

THIS BRAND ALWAYS LOOKS SO GOOD IN THE COMMERCIALS. I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO TRY IT.
UH ...THIS IS CAT FOOD.
DON'T MAKE THIS WEIRDER THAN IT HAS TO BE!
12-20

## CROSSWORD

*By Eugene Sheffer*

**ACROSS**

1 Crystal gazer
5 Copper head?
8 Eldest Stark child on "Game of Thrones"
12 Jr.-year exam
13 Misery
14 Mayberry boy
15 Valuable volume
17 Pretzel topper
18 Actor Brynner
19 Blunder
20 Screams
21 Flushed
22 Vat
23 Poultry choice
26 Scroll material
30 "Hey, sailor!"
31 Jewel
32 Oxidation result
33 Munich setting
35 Golf great Sam
36 Long. crosser
37 Compass dir.
38 Hotel area
41 "O Sole —"
42 Ton fractions (Abbr.)
45 Teen fave
46 Savory deli roll
48 Bistro handout
49 Swiss canton
50 Competent
51 Use the oven
52 Eastern path
53 Slightly

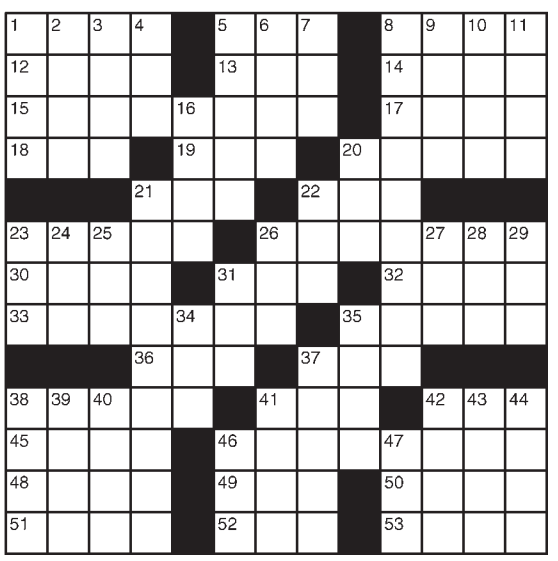
**DOWN**

1 Agile
2 Jacob's brother
3 Count counterpart
4 Hwy.
5 "Don't say —" ("Hush")
6 Rude dude
7 "A spider!"
8 "Bridesmaids" actress
9 October stone
10 Check
11 Wagers
16 Existed
20 "Uh-huh"
21 Queenly color
22 Highland hat
23 Taxi
24 "Now I get it!"
25 Angle (Abbr.)
26 Pot pie morsel
27 Paris street
28 Can. neighbor
29 Norm, for short
31 "Shoo!"
34 Shaft of light
35 Elitist
37 "Old MacDonald" refrain
38 Branch
39 Classic theaters
40 Hit on the noggin
41 "—Breckinridge"
42 Pride parade initialism
43 Lugosi of film
44 Coaster
46 Boring routine
47 Small battery

**Solution time: 22 mins.**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| P | A | W | | | A | F | T | | F | O | G | S |
| U | S | A | F | | R | A | H | | I | A | M | S |
| S | I | R | I | | M | R | I | | D | R | A | T |
| H | A | Y | D | N | | M | E | L | D | | | |
| | | | D | A | S | | F | E | L | I | N | E |
| W | E | A | L | T | H | Y | | G | E | N | O | A |
| A | C | R | E | | Y | O | U | | S | T | I | R |
| S | C | I | F | I | | O | R | A | T | O | R | S |
| P | E | D | A | N | T | | L | V | I | | | |
| | | | D | A | R | T | | E | C | L | A | T |
| C | H | A | D | | A | I | D | | K | A | L | E |
| P | O | L | L | | S | K | I | | S | O | T | S |
| R | O | P | E | | H | I | P | | | S | I | S |

**Yesterday's answer 12-20**



**STUMPED?** For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

**CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY:** Jonah Hill, 39; David Cook, 40; Nicole de Boer, 52; Joel Gretsch, 59.

**Happy Birthday:** Follow your heart and your goals, but be cognizant of how much time, effort and cash you spend trying to reach your dream. Question people you encounter who try to talk you into something you don't need. Focus on being resilient and dedicated to what's meaningful to you. Change only what's necessary; everything will fall into place. Your numbers are 4, 12, 18, 27, 33, 35, 43.

**ARIES** *(March 21-April 19):* Emotional spending won't solve the problem. Step back, look over your financial situation and plan to save more next year. Helping those less fortunate will encourage you to handle your dilemmas with patience and goodwill. A change of pace is favored. ✪✪✪

**TAURUS** *(April 20-May 20):* Share your thoughts and feelings, and find out where you stand. You'll be surprised by the response you receive, and it will help you put your life in perspective and your plans in place. Leave nothing to chance; move forward. ✪✪✪

**GEMINI** *(May 21-June 20):* You can agree to help, but don't sign up to take over a project that doesn't belong to you. Put your time and effort where they will have the biggest impacts and make you feel good about what you can offer. ✪✪✪

**CANCER** *(June 21-July 22):* Plan to get together with people who put a smile on your face and pique your imagination. An exciting idea will capture your attention and encourage you to take on a new project. Baby steps will save you from loss along the way. ✪✪✪✪

**LEO** *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Impulsive acts will lead to trouble. Slow down, and don't try to buy love. Helping a cause you believe in will lift your spirits. What you do for others will offer the greatest reward. Be generous of heart, not cash. ✪✪

**VIRGO** *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Home is where the heart is. Work with the people you care about most to make a warm and comfy environment where you can catch up and discuss long-term plans. The input you receive will change your course of action. ✪✪✪✪

**LIBRA** *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Be careful about approaching sensitive issues with family and friends. You will likely start a feud if you don't choose your words wisely. Shared expenses or joint ventures will take a turn. Be ready to make a move to avoid loss. ✪✪✪

**SCORPIO** *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Let your creative imagination take over and you'll come up with ideas and plans that will change your life and the lives of those you encounter. Speak up, share your thoughts and press forward with compassion and a positive attitude. ✪✪✪

**SAGITTARIUS** *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Don't take a risk or get involved in someone's dubious scheme. Do what feels right and best for you, and don't look back. Forward motion will release you from what's holding you back. Don't let uncertainty stand in your way. ✪✪✪

## EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

COPYRIGHT 2007 UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

**CAPRICORN** *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Change will brighten your day. Look at each situation as a project and adjust what doesn't fit your plans. Don't wait for life to come to you. Take control, listen to reason and show strength in pursuing what makes you happy. ✪✪✪✪

**AQUARIUS** *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* An emotional incident will change your plans. Don't let trivial matters ruin your day or stop you from taking care of time-sensitive last-minute chores. Choose to be original and practical, not flashy, regarding your gift and celebration budget. ✪✪

**PISCES** *(Feb. 19-March 20):* You can't buy love, but your kindness will. Changing how you handle your money will set the stage for a bright future. Offer to contribute to something worthy. Spending time helping others will get you in the festive spirit. ✪✪✪✪✪

**Birthday Baby:** You are charming, compassionate and helpful. You are active and relentless.

*✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.*

## SUDOKU

**Conceptis Sudoku** *By Dave Green*

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | 2 | 7 | | | | | 3 |
| | | | | 6 | | 4 | | |
| | 4 | | | | 8 | | | 1 |
| | | 9 | 3 | 8 | 5 | | | 4 |
| | 3 | | | | | | 8 | |
| 6 | | | 2 | 1 | 9 | 5 | | |
| 2 | | | 6 | | | | 4 | |
| | | 8 | | 4 | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | 3 | 7 | | 6 |

Difficulty Level ★★ 12/20

©2012 Conceptis Puzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate, Inc.

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

**Yesterday's Answer**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 9 | 7 | 8 |
| 6 | 4 | 9 | 7 | 3 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 5 |
| 7 | 8 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 6 |
| 8 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 4 |
| 9 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 7 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 1 |
| 2 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 9 |
| 4 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 5 | 8 | 7 |
| 3 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 9 | 2 |
| 1 | 9 | 5 | 2 | 8 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 3 |

©2012 Conceptis Puzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate, Inc.

## WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

**HOW TO PLAY:** All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

**SNOWFALLS ARE PRETTY** **Solution: 9 letters**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| G | E | W | I | N | D | Y | M | T | A | O | C | O | L | D |
| F | N | G | N | T | E | E | L | S | H | E | A | V | Y | O |
| S | O | I | A | A | U | W | A | L | K | G | M | W | N | R |
| P | S | R | T | T | M | L | A | C | I | A | I | I | F | E |
| O | A | N | E | A | T | W | O | L | G | H | S | N | R | M |
| R | E | I | O | S | K | O | O | I | D | L | C | T | A | M |
| T | S | K | N | W | T | S | C | N | E | T | R | E | C | I |
| S | K | N | W | T | F | A | A | G | S | N | Y | R | S | H |
| S | I | A | E | R | L | L | N | J | A | H | S | U | L | S |
| M | I | B | I | E | R | A | A | G | L | I | T | T | E | R |
| R | N | W | V | E | W | C | G | K | L | M | A | E | I | F |
| O | G | O | D | O | K | O | S | A | E | O | L | C | G | R |
| T | H | N | N | E | B | T | I | L | N | S | V | A | H | O |
| S | O | S | T | O | A | S | T | M | I | T | T | E | N | S |
| W | E | A | T | H | E | R | E | L | K | R | A | P | S | T |

© 2022 Andrews McMeel Syndication www.wonderword.com 12/20

Calm, Chilly, Coat, Cold, Cottage, Crystal, Forest, Frost, Glitter, Gloves, Glow, Hats, Heavy, Jacket, Magical, Melt, Mittens, Night, Paint, Peace, Scarf, Season, Shimmer, Shovel, Skating, Skiing, Sleet, Sleigh, Slush, Snow Angels, Snowbank, Snowflakes, Snowman, Sparkle, Sports, Storms, Toboggan, Tree, View, Walk, Weather, Windy, Winter, Wonderland

**Yesterday's Answer: Smoothies**

To purchase **THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volumes 56 through 70,** order online at www.WonderWordBooks.com.

# Raiders' Jones snags Patriots' lateral for walk-off win

**LAS VEGAS** (AP)—Defensive end Chandler Jones grabbed a bizarre, unnecessary lateral by New England's Jakobi Meyers out of the air on the final play and returned it 48 yards for a touchdown, giving the Las Vegas Raiders a 30-24 victory over the Patriots on Sunday.

With the game tied at 24-all, the Patriots decided to run a series of pitches in a last-ditch attempt to avoid overtime. Rhamondre Stevenson pitched the ball to Meyers, who heaved it across the field and into the arms of Jones, who stiff-armed Patriots QB Mac Jones and then had nothing but open field in front of him.

The wild finish bailed out the Raiders (6-8), who led 17-3 at halftime before allowing the Patriots (7-7) to score 21 straight points. Las Vegas scored two touchdowns in the final 32 seconds and seriously damaged New England's playoff hopes.

Stevenson had 19 carries for 172 yards, including a 34-yard touchdown with 3:43 left that appeared to put the game away.

But the Raiders answered in the final minute. Derek Carr found Keenan Cole in the left corner of the end zone for a 30-yard TD.

Carr completed 20 of 38 passes for 231 yards and three touchdowns. Josh Jacobs rushed for 93 yards on 22 carries as the Raiders ended a six-game losing streak to the Patriots dating to 2002.

## Bengals 34, Buccaneers 23

In Tampa, Fla., Joe Burrow threw for four second-half touchdowns and surging Cincinnati rallied from a 17-point deficit to beat Tom Brady and Tampa Bay.

The Bengals (10-4) won their sixth straight and retained sole possession of first place in the AFC North. Trey Flowers intercepted Brady to set up one touchdown and Logan Wilson sacked the seven-time Super Bowl champion to force a fumble that led to another TD.

The first-place Bucs (6-8) wasted an opportunity to take a two-game lead over Carolina, Atlanta and New Orleans in the woeful NFC South.

Burrow began Cincinnati's comeback from a 17-0 deficit with a field goal drive in the final 1:39 of the opening half. He threw scoring passes of 5 yards to Tee Higgins, 3 yards to Tyler Boyd, 8 yards to Ja'Marr Chase and 12 yards to Mitchell Wilcox.

Burrow finished 27 of 39 for 200 yards and an interception. After being outgained 261 yards to 83 while running just 20 plays to Tampa Bay's 40 in the first half, the Bengals scored on drives of 13, 31, 13 and 39 yards with help from Bucs mistakes after halftime.

## Jaguars 40, Cowboys 34, OT

In Jacksonville, Fla., Rayshawn Jenkins intercepted Dak Prescott's bobbled pass and returned it 52 yards for a touchdown that gave Jacksonville the overtime victory over Dallas.

Noah Brown failed to secure Prescott's low throw, and Jenkins made a shoelace grab and went untouched the other way to end Jacksonville's NFL-record 20-game skid against NFC teams.

The Cowboys (10-4) ended a four-game winning streak but later secured a playoff spot when the NFC East rival New York Giants won at Washington. The Jaguars (6-8), meanwhile, could gain ground on Tennessee in the topsy-turvy AFC South.

Jacksonville won the toss in overtime and had a chance to win it with Trevor Lawrence, who threw for 318 yards and four touchdowns. But the Jaguars went three-and-out, giving the Cowboys a chance to win after squandering a 27-10 lead. Prescott's third-down pass proved to be a difference-maker.

Prescott completed 23 of 30 passes for 256 yards, with three touchdowns and two interceptions. Two of his TD passes went to Brown.

## Commanders 20, Giants 12

In Landover, Md., Kayvon Thibodeaux was prepared for the national stage just like he promised, Daniel Jones shined under the lights to end his career-long skid in night games and New York beat Washington to bolster its playoff chances and hurt those of a rival.

After declaring, "Prime time likes me," Thibodeaux was a force rushing the passer and busting into the backfield. He stripped Taylor Heinicke of the ball, recovered it to score a touchdown and finished with three tackles for loss.

Jones, 0-9 in his first nine prime-time games for the Giants (8-5-1) who had lost 11 in a row in these situations, was 21 of 32 for 160 yards and engineered an 18-play touchdown drive in the second quarter that started at the 3 and lasted 8:35.

Saquon Barkley ended that drive with a 3-yard run into the end zone on a direct snap.

AP

Las Vegas Raiders defensive end Chandler Jones (55) breaks a tackle by New England Patriots quarterback Mac Jones (10) to score a touchdown on an interception during the second half of an NFL football game between the New England Patriots and Las Vegas Raiders, Sunday, Dec. 18, 2022, in Las Vegas.

Barkley finished with 87 yards rushing.

## Chiefs 30, Texans 24, OT

In Houston, Jerick McKinnon ran for a 26-yard touchdown in overtime and Kansas City beat Houston to clinch its seventh straight AFC West title.

The Chiefs (11-3) got the ball first in overtime but had to punt after Patrick Mahomes was sacked by Blake Cashman on third down. Texans quarterback Davis Mills fumbled on a scramble on Houston's first play, and it was recovered by Kansas City's Willie Gay on the Texans 26.

McKinnon, who also had a TD reception, dashed untouched into the end zone on the next play.

Mahomes threw for 336 yards and two touchdowns and ran for a score as Kansas City overcame two turnovers and a season-high 102 penalty yards to win for the seventh time in eight games.

The Chiefs trailed most of the day. Mahomes dashed 5 yards into the end zone early in the fourth quarter and hit McKinnon for the 2-point conversion to give Kansas City a 24-21 lead. Houston (1-12-1) tied it on Ka'imi Fairbairn's 29-yard field goal with 5:11 left in regulation.

## Lions 20, Jets 17

In East Rutherford, N.J., Jared Goff threw a go-ahead 51-yard touchdown pass to Brock Wright on fourth-and-1 with 1:49 remaining, and Detroit held on to beat Zach Wilson and New York.

Coming out of the two-minute warning, Goff looked to his left and found Wright wide open, and the tight end rumbled untouched into the end zone.

Wilson and the Jets had one more chance. He completed a 20-yard pass to Elijah Moore on fourth down, setting up Greg Zuerlein for a 58-yard field-goal try. But the kick went wide left, sending the Lions (7-7) to their third straight win and sixth in their past seven games.

The loss further damaged the playoff hopes for the Jets (7-7), who are looking to snap an 11-year postseason drought.

## Chargers 17, Titans 14

In Inglewood, Calif., Cameron Dicker connected on a 43-yard field goal with 4 seconds remaining and Los Angeles beat Tennessee.

The Titans appeared to force overtime when Ryan Tannehill scored on a 1-yard QB sneak with 48 seconds remaining, but the Chargers responded by going 52 yards in six plays. Mike Williams had the key play on the drive, a 35-yard reception between two defenders at the Titans 20-yard line.

Justin Herbert had his third straight 300-yard game. He completed 28 of 42 passes for 313 yards but didn't throw a touchdown pass for only the third time in 46 career games.

Austin Ekeler scored his AFC-leading 14th touchdown of the season early in the fourth quarter.

Ekeler finished with 70 scrimmage yards, including 58 rushing. Joshua Kelley also scored a touchdown as the Chargers moved into the sixth spot in the AFC after losses by Miami, New England and the New York Jets.

## Eagles 25, Bears 20

In Chicago, Jalen Hurts tied a career high by running for three touchdowns and Philadelphia outlasted Chicago.

The Eagles (13-1), with the best record in the NFL, made just enough plays to come away with a tighter-than-anticipated win.

Chicago's Justin Fields rushed for 95 yards to reach exactly 1,000 on the season, joining Michael Vick and Lamar Jackson as the only quarterbacks to rush for 1,000 or more. He also set a franchise single-season rushing record for a QB. But the Bears (3-11) lost their seventh straight game — their worst skid since dropping eight in a row in 2002 to match a franchise record.

Hurts is also closing in on history as a rusher. He has 13 rushing touchdowns, one short of the NFL record for a QB, set by Cam Newton during his rookie year in 2011.

Hurts finished with 61 yards rushing and has 747 this season. He also threw for 315 yards, completing 22 of 37 passes with two interceptions.

## Steelers 24, Panthers 16

In Charlotte, N.C., Mitch Trubisky threw for 179 yards and engineered three long touchdown drives as Pittsburgh beat Carolina.

Trubisky, filling in for concussed rookie Kenny Pickett, ran for a 1-yard touchdown and played turnover-free football. Najee Harris carried 24 times for 86 yards and a touchdown and Jaylen Warren added a 2-yard TD run for Pittsburgh (6-8), which has won three of its last four.

The Panthers (5-9) can still win the unimpressive NFC South if they win their last three games.

Carolina, a run-first team, couldn't get anything going on the ground. The Panthers managed just 21 yards on 16 carries as the Steelers stacked the box and dared Sam Darnold to beat them.

Darnold finished 14 of 23 for 225 yards with a 5-yard touchdown pass to D.J. Moore. But he was sacked four times, and the Panthers struggled in the red zone.

## Saints 21, Falcons 18

In New Orleans, Andy Dalton and Taysom Hill combined to throw three touchdown passes, and New Orleans beat Atlanta in rookie quarterback Desmond Ridder's debut.

Juwan Johnson had career-high 67 yards receiving and caught both of Dalton's scoring passes. Hill, a utility player who lines up mostly at tight end, threw his second touchdown pass of the season on a 73-yard connection with rookie receiver Rashid Shaheed.

New Orleans (5-9) remained mathematically alive in the anemic NFC South.

Atlanta (5-9) was down by a field goal and threating to score with less than three minutes remaining when Ridder hit Drake London over the middle for first-down yardage on fourth-and-5. But safety Justin Evans punched the ball from London's grasp, and cornerback Bradley Robey snagged it out of the air.

## Broncos 24, Cardinals 15

In Denver, backup quarterback Brett Rypien overcame relentless pressure, Justin Simmons had two interceptions and Denver held off Arizona.

The game featured two backup QBs, but Arizona lost Colt McCoy to a concussion early in the third quarter after he took a hit while diving for a first down. McCoy was intercepted once and his replacement, Trace McSorley, threw two more picks.

Rypien was sacked seven times, including three by J.J. Watt, but directed three second-half scoring drives to help the Broncos (4-10) snap a five-game losing streak.

Latavius Murray ran for 130 yards and a touchdown, Marlon Mack also had a rushing TD, and Rypien threw a short scoring pass to Eric Tomlinson as Denver turned a 9-3 deficit into a 24-9 lead.

Subbing for Russell Wilson, who was held out for safety reasons after clearing the concussion protocol, Rypien had 197 yards passing and one interception.

The only offense generated by the Cardinals early on were three field goals by former Bronco Matt Prater. James Conner had a late TD run for the Cardinals (4-10), who have lost four straight.

# Brunson scores 30, Knicks beat Pacers for 7th straight win

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Jalen Brunson scored 30 points, Julius Randle made six free throws in the final minute and the New York Knicks beat the Indiana Pacers 109-106 on Sunday for their NBA-best seventh consecutive victory.

The 19th and final lead change came in the final minute, when Randle made two foul shots with 45.6 seconds remaining for a 105-104 lead. After the teams exchanged turnovers, Randle hit four more free throws in the final two possessions. The Pacers missed a shot from just inside half-court at the buzzer.

Randle finished with 25 points and 14 rebounds. RJ Barrett added 24 points.

Brunson, who was 11 of 22 from the field with three 3-pointers, started a fourth-quarter comeback from a 104-98 hole with a 3-pointer and then a steal and a layup in a span of 24 seconds.

Buddy Hield and Aaron Nesmith each had 23 points for Indiana. Tyrese Haliburton and Bennedict Haliburton each added 15.

### Timberwolves 150, Bulls 126

In Minneapolis, Anthony Edwards had season highs with 37 points and 11 assists and Minnesota broke the franchise record for points in a game.

D'Angelo Russell added 28 points after missing two games and the Timberwolves made a season-high 23 pointers to roll past Chicago despite missing four regulars.

Rudy Gobert missed his second straight game because of a sprained left ankle. Karl-Anthony Towns (right calf strain) and top reserves Jordan McLaughlin (left calf strain) and Taurean Prince (right shoulder) also sat out.

### Magic 95, Celtics 92

In Boston, Paolo Banchero scored 31 points and Admiral Schofield had 11 of his 13 in the fourth quarter to help Orlando complete a sweep of consecutive games in Boston.

Franz Wagner added 12 points and Bol Bol had 11 with eight rebounds for the Magic, who were 1-11 on the road before the two straight wins over the Celtics.

Jaylen Brown led the Celtics with 24 points, Marcus Smart had 15 and Grant Williams 14.

### Warriors 126, Raptors 110

In Toronto, Jordan Poole scored a career-high 43 points, Klay Thompson had 17 and Golden State won for the first time in five tries this season without the injured Stephen Curry.

Draymond Green returned after sitting out Friday's loss at Philadelphia because of a sore right quadriceps and finished with 17 points and nine rebounds in 37 minutes as the Warriors snapped a three-game losing streak and improved to 3-14 on the road. Kevon Looney added 11 points and 11 rebounds for the Warriors, whose last road win came Nov. 27 at Minnesota.

Poole shot 14 for 23, a career-high for made baskets, and went 5 for 11 from 3-point range. His previous career high was 38.

### Nets 124, Pistons 121

In Detroit, Kevin Durant scored 26 of his 43 points in the third quarter, helping Brooklyn overcome a 17-point halftime deficit.

Kyrie Irving added 38 points in Brooklyn's seventh straight victory over Detroit.

Durant was 8 of 10 from the floor, going 3 of 3 on 3-pointers and 7 of 7 from the free-throw line as he outscored the Pistons 26-25 in the third.

### Nuggets 119, Hornets 115

In Denver, Nikola Jokic had 40 points, a career-high 27 rebounds and 10 assists in yet another triple-double to help Denver beat Charlotte.

Jokic got his fifth triple-double of the season and 81st overall. He had 20 rebounds in the first half. Wilt Chamberlain is the only other player with at least 40 points, 27 rebounds and 10 assists in an NBA game. He did it four times, the last when he had 53 points, 32 rebounds and 14 assists for Philadelphia on March 18, 1968.

### Lakers 119, Wizards 117

In Los Angeles, LeBron James had 33 points and nine assists, Lonnie Walker scored 21 points and Los Angeles overcame the absence of Anthony Davis.

Davis, the Lakers' leader at 27.4 points and 12.1 rebounds, injured his right foot Friday night in a victory over Denver and is expected to be sidelined for several weeks.

Thomas Bryant added 16 points and 10 rebounds to help the Lakers win for the third time in their last four games and hand Washington its 10th straight loss and 13th in 14 games.

## QUEENS

*From Page 19*

fans, family, and to coach Manny [Sablan] for always looking for me to help them out…" said Camacho.

With the team's almost undefeated record, Camacho said "It's still an impressive record. Who would have thought we would have almost a perfect record? It was a challenge to compete because it's our first time to compete out here and to see what the other teams have to offer during the game time."

Along with Bert Camacho, Babauta, Cabrera, Salalila, and Mizer, the rest of the Queens lineup include Jul Ngeskebei, Kiana Camacho, Allana Sablan, Keolani Rios, Destiny Pangelinan, and Mariko Laniyo. The team's leading batter, Kiana Aldan, was off-island and was unable to receive her individual awards for most triples, most home runs, most RBIs, and regular season MVP.

Results of the men's championship game will be posted in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune*.

## LEUGERS

*From Page 19*

For two days, a number of events were held such as the open and masters division for the field events of shot put, long jump, discus throw, javelin throw, and the track events of 100m, 200m, 800m, 1,600m, and 5K.

"Overall, the meet gives an opportunity for coaches and athletes to see current performance levels as we approach the end of the year. We look forward to writing the next chapter of athletics in the year 2023 and beyond," said NMA secretary general Robin Sapong.

Results of the other events will come out in the next editions of *Saipan Tribune*.

## MBAPPÉ

*From Page 20*

"Kylian has really left his mark on this final," France coach Didier Deschamps said.

Mbappé had been the leader France desperately needed as time was running out with the defending champions trailing 2-0 and playing poorly. The forward had also been almost invisible up to that point.

But his goals carried France back into the match — twice. First, late in regulation time. Then again deep in extra time.

Mbappé converted a penalty in the 80th minute and then scored with a volley from just inside the area in the 81st.

It took only 97 seconds for him to get France even with Argentina and the great Lionel Messi.

Mbappé scored a second penalty in extra time, about 10 minutes after Messi had given Argentina the lead again in what became a compelling duel between the two players.

Mbappé's hat trick was only the second in a World Cup final — the other was by England striker Geoff Hurst in 1966.

The Frenchman leaves Qatar with the Golden Boot trophy as the tournament's top scorer with eight goals. At the age of 23, he's matched Pelé's career total of 12 World Cup goals.

But Mbappé couldn't quite match the Brazil great's back-to-back World Cup titles — both players were teenagers when they won their first one, Pelé in 1958 and Mbappé in 2018.

One minute before Mbappé turned the game on its head, Argentina's fans began to taunt him.

Chants of "Olé, Olé" rained down from the stands at Lusail Stadium as Mbappé futilely chased the ball while his opponents passed it over and around him.

Mbappé gestured in frustration with his right arm at the apparent hopelessness of the situation.

But after scoring his first two goals, Mbappé surged into the Argentina half looking for a game-winning third. His darting, twisting run resulted in a shot deflected just too high.

Once he eventually got the hat trick to make it 3-3 in extra time, Mbappé set out for a fourth. His curling cross barely eluded the head of substitute Randal Kolo Muani, and a final dribble deep into the Argentina penalty area was scrambled clear as he looked to shoot.

He shouted out loud as his last attempt to win the game single-handedly slipped away.

Mbappé tried to set the tone in the penalty shootout, taking responsibility for the first kick. He converted the penalty but France still ended up losing 4-2. Messi did the same for Argentina to start the shootout, but his teammates all scored their penalties.

During the shootout, Mbappé made sure he was the first to console Kingsley Coman and Aurélien Tchouaméni on their slow walks back to the center circle after their failures to score.

Mbappé stood bent over in the center circle, hands on his knees, as Argentina defender Gonzalo Montiel prepared to take the decisive kick. He then squatted, saw the net ripple and walked away alone amid the Argentina celebrations.

Deschamps eventually came over behind his player to put arms around his neck. Mbappé soon went to the team dugout and sat slumped in a chair with his dark blue shirt pulled up over his face to hide his emotions.

Long after the game was over, Mbappé left the stadium with his head bowed and the World Cup trophy securely in the hands of Messi.

## ARGENTINA

*From Page 20*

and then in every round of the knockout stage.

The torch will one day pass to Mbappé, but not just yet.

"Let's go, Argentina!" Messi roared into a microphone on the field in the post-match celebrations after playing in a record 26th World Cup match.

Later, he said: "I can't wait to be in Argentina to witness the insanity of this."

Messi had a tantalizing glimpse of the 18-carat gold World Cup trophy when walking on the stage to collect the Golden Ball, awarded to the player of the tournament. He even kissed the World Cup and rubbed it repeatedly.

He got his hands on it for good about 10 minutes later, after a ceremonial robe — a bisht — was draped over his shoulders by Qatar's emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. And, oh, did he enjoy the moment, celebrating with his family and the teammates who put Argentina atop the soccer world for the first time since the 1986 World Cup in Mexico. The country's other title came in 1978 on home soil.

Messi was in scintillating form from the start of the final, putting Argentina ahead from the penalty spot after Angel Di Maria was tripped and later playing a part in a flowing team move that resulted in Di Maria making it 2-0 after 36 minutes.

Mbappé, on the other hand, was anonymous until bursting into life by scoring two goals in a 97-second span — one an 80th-minute penalty, the other a volley from just inside the area after a quick exchange of passes — to take the game to extra time at 2-2.

Messi still had plenty of energy and he was on hand to tap in his second goal in the 108th minute, with a France defender clearing the ball just after it had crossed the line. Argentina was on the brink of the title once again, but there was still time for another penalty from Mbappé, after a handball, to take the thrilling game to a shootout.

"We managed to come back from the dead," said France coach Didier Deschamps, whose team was looking to become the first back-to-back champions since Brazil in 1962.

Mbappé and Messi took their teams' first penalties and scored. Kingsley Coman had an attempt saved by Argentina goalkeeper Emi Martinez and Aurelien Tchouameni then missed for France, giving Gonzalo Montiel the opportunity to end it. He converted the penalty to the left and sparked wild celebrations.

"The match was completely insane," said Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni, who was asked if he had a message for Maradona, who died two years ago.

"If he had been here, he would have enjoyed it so much," Scaloni said. "He would have been the first person on the field (to celebrate). I wish he'd have been here to enjoy the moment."

Europe's run of four straight World Cup winners, dating to 2006, came to an end. The last South American champion was Brazil, and that was also in Asia — when Japan and South Korea hosted the tournament in 2002.

In Qatar, Argentina backed up its victory from last year's Copa America, its first major trophy since 1993. It's quite the climax to Messi's international career, which is not over just yet. He said after the match that he would continue to play with the national team.

It was quite a final for a unique World Cup — the first to be played in the Arab world.

For FIFA and the Qatari organizers, a final between two major soccer nations and the world's two best players represented a perfect way to cap a tournament laced in controversy ever since the scandal-shrouded vote in 2010 to give the event to a tiny Arab emirate.

The years-long scrutiny since has focused on the switch of dates from the traditional June-July period to November-December, strong criticism of how migrant workers have been treated, and then unease about taking soccer's biggest event to a nation where homosexual acts are illegal.

On Sunday, there was one narrative at play for most people: Could Messi do it?

He could, despite the 23-year-old Mbappé doing all he could to deny his Paris Saint-Germain teammate. Finishing the tournament as the top scorer with eight goals is likely only a crumb of comfort.

Messi has been a man on a mission in the Middle East, determined to erase memories of his only other World Cup final — in 2014 when Argentina lost to Germany 1-0 and Messi squandered a great chance in the second half.

On that night at the Maracana Stadium, Messi stared down at that golden World Cup trophy that escaped him.

# Queens of Diamond takes softball tiara

LEIGH GASES

Queens of Diamond is the women's division champion of the 2022 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball League after defeating the Hotshots in Game 3 of their best-of-three championship series, 23-11, last Sunday at the jam-packed Dandan Softball Field.

**By LEIGH GASES**
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

The women's division softball crown is now in the possession of its rightful owners—the Queens of Diamond—after they conquered the Hotshots in the best-of-three championship series in the 2022 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball League last Sunday at the jam-packed Dandan Softball Field.

It was the first time that the women's division was introduced into the league with the Queens of Diamond now the first and reigning champions. Throughout the regular season, the Queens lived up to their name and showed their prowess in the diamond as they came into the postseason nearly unscathed with nine wins against a single loss.

In the battle for softball supremacy, however, the Queens were handed just their second loss in the whole season, in a 15-12 setback to the Hotshots. The Queens' nerves were shot with multiple errors on the field as the game slipped from their grasp with the Hotshots forcing a tie-breaking third and final championship game.

The Hotshots' burning energy fizzled out in the final game though, as the Queens reignited their desire for first place—pacing their defense, backing up their pitcher, and scorching the field with their back-to-back runs like wildfire and won Game 3 handily, 23-11.

While the Hotshots dominated earlier in the second game, the Queens with the vengeance returned the favor and more as they assaulted Hotshots pitcher Janice Celis with run after run. In all, they pelted Celis with eight runs in the first inning and 11 in the fifth.

After a seven-run second inning by the Hotshots led by Erica Tenorio and Ash Aguon's two RBI each, the Queens, in the blistering heat of the day, made a comeback that turned up the temperature of the game with multiple inside-the-park home runs burning through the field from the Queens' bats.

The Queens' Bong Babauta brought in two RBIs with her second-inning inside-the-park homerun; and in the fifth inning, Rachel Salalila brought in three RBIs, while Amy Cabrera brought in four RBIs right after.

The Hotshots were unable to douse the Queens' hot streak of runs as they failed to catch up in the final innings and Queens pitcher Bert Camacho made sure her pitches were untouchable.

With her stellar performance on the mound and in the batter's box, Bert Camacho, who is also the team captain, was handed the finals MVP award during the awards ceremony after the game.

"We played hard all season and I really think that it was a lot of teamwork with the team and that's how we made it all the way to the top. We took [the] pennant, a lot of the individual trophies are coming to us—to this team, and I am thankful to Froilan Camacho, Manny Sablan, and Paul Salalila for coaching this team all the way to the top."

"[In the] final game, we… kind of made a lot of errors in Game 2. We took Game 1, made a lot of errors in Game 2, [but] came back [in] Game 3. And I [told] the girls, 'recollect, play hard, but let's have fun,' and that's how we did it," said the MVP.

First base Thelma Mizer chimed in and said "thanks for the motivation of our team captain Bert Camacho… Always, always, always in every game and every practice, always motivating the kids… no negative, everything is positive. That's what really counts."

Coach Froilan Camacho said after losing Game 2, "We needed to do some recuperation to discuss again what is our next strategy to fulfill our next game… Me and coach Manny [Sablan], we put our heads together to figure out what's our next strategy to take Game 3 and it… worked for us. The other team is a very strong team. They put their heart out to defeat the other teams… So, it was a chance for them… to reach us and compete."

"I want to thank my girls that played today. To our

See QUEENS on Page 18

# Leugers, Wang, Furan top 5K in Track and Field Challenge

**By LEIGH GASES**
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

Kate Leugers, Jireh Wang, and Matthew Furan topped the 5K event of their respective divisions in last weekend's Northern Marianas Athletics Track and Field Challenge at the Oleai Sports Complex.

Leugers clocked in first with a time of 21:32 to beat Barbara Wang who finished in 27:24.

In the men's open division, Jireh Wang came barreling in first against five other runners with a time of 21:43. Second is Pony Tang with a time of 22:16; third is Aaron Wang with a time of 23:39; fourth is James Lin with a time of 24:12; Juke Chen came in with a time of 25:04; and Edward Dela Cruz Jr. timed in at 25:04:13.

For the master's division, Run Saipan member Matthew Furan clocked in at 23:41, with another Run Saipan member, Chong Nam Lee, a mere seconds behind him with a time of 23:55.

Leugers, who also topped the recent Turkey Trot up Mt. Tapochao, said that this event was her "bread and butter."

"The race is fun. As a post-collegiate athlete, I don't get that many opportunities to return to the track and so it was fun to do an early morning run with folks on a track again… It was breezy. We had a little bit of rain so it cooled things down, but it was perfect conditions." said the 33-year-old Commonwealth Health Center physician's assistant about the race.

She said she joined the 5K and not any other events because she is "healing from a couple of injuries and I don't think I should go really fast right now, but I was a long distance runner in college."

Jireh Wang told *Saipan Tribune* that he felt pretty good coming in first. "Thank God he gave me strength to run the race well. It was a very close race and very challenging, but I think I won because there were not a lot of runners who joined the 5K."

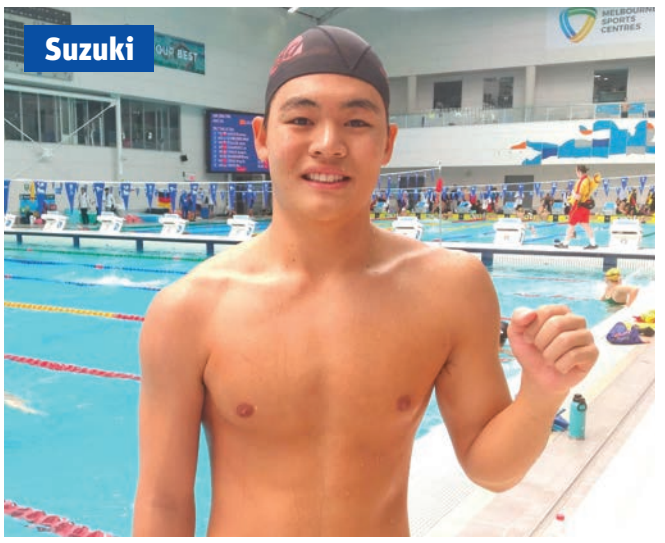
After the event, Furan said he is thankful, honored, and challenged. "Thankful as any success in life comes with preparation. Thankful to have the drive and health to do so. I'm honored to run and compete with some great runners on our beautiful island. Challenged to become better the next time. Life is meant for us to move forward and to keep pressing on."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Kate Leugers is seen running the track in the 5K race of the Northern Marianas Athletics Track and Field Challenge held last Friday and Saturday at the Oleai Sports Complex.

See LEUGERS on Page 18

# Jinnosuke also rises




**By MARK RABAGO**
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Jinnosuke Suzuki made up for a sub-par 100m freestyle by resetting the CNMI national record in the 200m freestyle in Day 6 of the 2022 FINA World Championships last Saturday in Melbourne.

The Team NMI captain swam the 200m freestyle in 1:56.27 to eclipse his own record and in the process also received 624 FINA points.

"I was disappointed that I couldn't get a best time for my 100m freestyle but I am glad that I was able to make it up by getting my best time on the 200m freestyle. I went out pretty fast on the first 50m of the 200m and was able to keep a steady pace after that. I am satisfied with my overall results," said Suzuki.

CNMI national swimming coach Hiroyuki Kimura is proud that his ward was able to conquer the pressure and stress after not performing up to par in his first event.

"He broke his personal best time from Abu Dhabi and that means he updated his NMI record. Jinnosuke is the captain of this team. He really worked hard for the team on this trip. But unfortunately, he failed to reach his goal in the 100m freestyle. So, he felt a huge pressure to do his best in his last event, the 200m freestyle," he said

The Tsunami Saipan Swimming Center head coach said Suzuki resetting his record in the 200m freestyle came after a dip in the swimmer's performance the past months.

"Jinnosuke lost his motivation after his non-selection to the Budapest World Championships last summer. Since then, his performance went down. His result times every practice went slower. I'm sure it took extraordinary mental strength from him to update his personal best time," said Kimura.

Isaiah Aleksenko and Maria Batallones also continued their excellent performances in the Land Down Under.

Aleksenko's 100m butterfly time of 54.55 broke his own NMI record in the event and was equivalent to the Japan Junior Olympic Final (15-16) time.

"From now on, we will target the World Junior Record (18-and-under). I think that will be the next challenge. As his coach, I believe there is a possibility," said Kimura.

As for Batallones, she swam the 50m breaststroke in an equally impressive time of 34.58 to break her own record.

"I've never known an NMI female swimmer who can cut 36 seconds whether it's for the long course or the short course. Her FINA points of 563 is also the highest FINA points in the past 10 years for an NMI female swimmer.

Shoko Litulumar is the fourth member of Team NMI in the 2022 FINA World Championships.

Raiders' Jones snags Patriots' lateral for walk-off win

PAGE 17

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Queens of Diamond takes softball tiara

PAGE 19

# Argentina beats France on penalties

AP

Argentina's Lionel Messi holds up the trophy after winning the World Cup final soccer match between Argentina and France at the Lusail Stadium in Lusail, Qatar, Sunday, Dec.18, 2022.

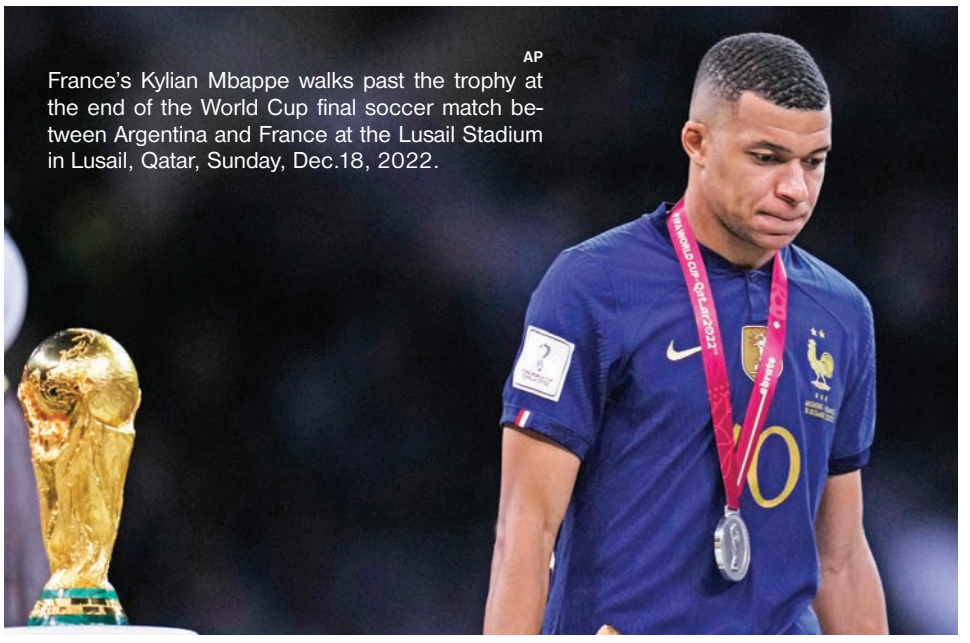
## Mbappé electrifies in '22 World Cwup epic, ends up on losing

By GRAHAM DUNBAR
AP SPORTS WRITER

**LUSAIL, Qatar** (AP)—Kylian Mbappé scored a hat trick seemingly from out of nowhere to electrify the World Cup final, he ended the tournament as the leading scorer with eight goals, and he still missed out on winning a second straight title.

The France superstar was on the losing side of an epic final against Argentina that was settled in a penalty shootout after a 3-3 draw on Sunday. He was then consoled on the field by French President Emmanuel Macron.

See MBAPPÉ on Page 18



AP

France's Kylian Mbappe walks past the trophy at the end of the World Cup final soccer match between Argentina and France at the Lusail Stadium in Lusail, Qatar, Sunday, Dec.18, 2022.

By STEVE DOUGLAS
AP SPORTS WRITER

**LUSAIL, Qatar** (AP)—Lionel Messi, wearing a black Qatari robe over his blue-and-white Argentina shirt, kissed the World Cup, shuffled toward his teammates and hoisted the golden trophy high in the air.

It was an iconic sight that finally — definitively — places the soccer superstar in the pantheon of the game's greatest players.

**» Messi finally wins World Cup**

Messi's once-in-a-generation career is complete: He is a World Cup champion.

In probably the wildest final in the tournament's 92-year history, Argentina won its third World Cup title by beating France 4-2 in a penalty shootout after a 3-3 draw featuring two goals from the 35-year-old Messi and a hat trick by his heir apparent, France forward Kylian Mbappé.

"It's just crazy that it became a reality this way," Messi said. "I craved for this so much. I knew God would bring this gift to me. I had the feeling that this (World Cup) was the one."

Amid the chaos inside Lusail Stadium, Mbappé did all he could to emulate Brazil great Pelé as a champion at his first two World Cups. Even scoring the first hat trick in a final since Geoff Hurst for England in 1966.

It wasn't enough.

Now there's no debate. Messi joins Pelé — a record three-time World Cup champion — and Diego Maradona, the late Argentina great with whom Messi was so often compared, in an exclusive club of the best soccer players of all time.

Who is the greatest? It's a discussion that will rage forever because there can never be a definitive answer. Messi has put up a good argument, though, and — with the World Cup title on his resume — he is surely above Cristiano Ronaldo as the best player of his generation.

Messi achieved what Maradona did in 1986 and dominated a World Cup for Argentina. He scored seven goals and embraced the responsibility of leading his team out of those dark moments after a shocking 2-1 loss to Saudi Arabia in the group stage.

Playing in the spirit of Maradona, Messi coupled his dazzling skills with rarely seen aggression and led Argentina to the title by becoming the first man in a single edition of the World Cup to score in the group stage

See ARGENTINA on Page 18